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WOMEN OF FASHION

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WOMEN OF FASHION

AND

REPRESENTATIVE WOMEN IN LETTERS AND SOCIETY.

A SERIES OF

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES.

BY

W H. DAVENPORT ADAMS,

AUTHOR OF

"THE ARCTIC WORLD," "THE MEDITERRANEAN ILLUSTRATED," "THE BIRD-WORLD," ETC.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.

1878.

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PREFACE.

I SUBMIT with diffidence the following pages to that much-enduring individual, the "general reader," in the hope they may afford pleasant and not unprofitable occupation for a leisure hour. The biographical sketches which they contain do not pretend to any subtlety or profundity of criticism; but simply aim at presenting in a variety of aspects the character of Woman as she appears in the world of Literature and Society. The subjects chosen are, therefore, "representative," and have been chosen because they *are* representative; but it is needless here to dwell on the strong moral and intellectual distinctions which separate a Harriet Martineau from a Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, or a Charlotte Brontë from a Countess of Blessington. The judgments pronounced, whether

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right or wrong, have at least been independently formed; and the narrative of facts is, I believe, in all cases uncoloured by prejudice or partiality.

The present volumes are confined to English Representative Women; but should they meet with a favourable reception from the reading public, the writer on another occasion may venture further afield.

W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

January, 1878.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU . . .	1
THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH . .	151
LADY MORGAN	265
MISS BERRY	333

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LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

A.D. 1690–1762.

I.

LADY MARY PIERREPONT was the eldest daughter of Evelyn, Marquis of Dorchester, and Earl of Kingston, afterwards Duke of Kingston, and his wife, the Lady Mary Fielding, daughter of William, Earl of Denbigh. She was born at Thoresby-in-Sherwood, Nottinghamshire, about the year 1690; and there brought up, along with her two sisters, Frances, afterwards Countess of Mar, and Evelyn, afterwards wife of Leveson Lord Gower, and ancestress of the present Duke of Sutherland. Her mother died when she was only four years old; but her father took special care of her education, and addressed himself to the cultivation of those talents which at an early age she conspicuously displayed. He was as proud of her personal charms as of her intellectual gifts. It is said that, one evening, in 1697, when present with lords, rakes, and wits, at a

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symposium of the celebrated Kit-Kat Club,* the beauties of the season having been freely toasted, the Earl of Kingston rose and proposed, as prettier than any of them, his daughter, Lady Mary. Some of the members demurred, on the ground that the rules of the Club precluded them from honouring a beauty whom they had never seen. "Then you shall see her," was the reply. And thereupon he sent orders home to have her finely dressed, and brought to him at the tavern. She was received, on her arrival, with admiring acclamations, and her claim being unanimously confirmed, her health was heartily drank by all, and her name, according to custom, engraved upon a drinking-glass. The child-beauty was by no means indifferent to the homage thus rendered. "Pleasure," she wrote, later in life, "was too poor a word to express my sensations. They amounted to ecstasy. Never again throughout my life did I pass so happy an evening."

Lady Mary's education, whatever we may think

* This celebrated Club met at a pastrycook's, one Christopher Cat, in Shire Lane, on the north-east side of Temple Bar. The sign of the house was the Cat and Fiddle (*i.e. Kit*); hence, perhaps, the name of the Club, which was the head-quarters of the Whig party.

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of it in these days of university examinations, was far superior to that of most of the ladies of the time. Probably, she owed little of it to her instructors. She would seem to have had a passionate love of books, which the large library at Thoresby enabled her to gratify. She studied Greek and Latin; and obtained such an insight into the latter that she was able to make a very fair translation of a Latin version of the 'Enchiridion' of Epictetus. This was corrected by Bishop Burnet, to whom she was under considerable obligations for "condescending," as she writes, "to direct the studies of a girl." Her reading was exceedingly miscellaneous. Nothing came amiss to her; and a good memory and a clear intellect enabled her to retain and arrange the information she thus collected. Even the monster romances of Madame Scudèri,* the perusal of which was possible only in an age when grave lords and fine ladies had but few books, and acknowledged but few duties; the whole library of Mrs. Lennox's 'Female Quixote,' 'Cleopâtre,' 'Clélie,' 'Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus,' 'Almahide,' 'Ibraham, ou l'Illustre Bassa,' and others, "Englished," mostly by "persons of honour," were devoured

* "Twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt."—*Pope.*

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by the insatiable beauty. Her chief favourite, however, was a translation of Honoré d'Urfé's 'Astrée,'* which had once been the delight of the courtiers of Henri Quatre; and in a third page of this mighty tome she wrote, in her finest caligraphy, a list of the characters, with descriptive epithets, as thus: Diana the beautiful, Clémène the volatile, the melancholy Doris, Celadon the faithful, and Adamas the wise.

The ponderous fictions which had amused Lady Mary's hours of relaxation were long preserved by the care of an "excellent person," a domestic in the family of Lady Bute, her descendant. The spectacles of this good lady, we are told, might always be found in 'Clélie' or 'Cassandre,' which she studied persistently for six days of the week, ranking them next in value to the Bible and Tillotson's 'Sermons;' because "they were all about good and virtuous people, not like the wicked trash she now saw young folks get from circulating libraries." Deeply did she regret the loss of another romance, which in interest and beauty, she said, surpassed them all, the 'History of Hiempsal, King

* Honoré d'Urfé was born at Marseilles in 1567, died near Nice in 1625. Besides 'L'Astrée,' which was supposed to be founded on some of the love-adventures of Henry IV., he wrote 'La Sirène,' a poem, and 'Épitres Morales.'

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of Numidia.' This she had read only once, and by no pains or search could ever she meet with it again. We are too busy nowadays to devote our time to the reading of these *ouvrages de longue haleine*, and yet we might do worse. It may at least be said of them that they are chivalrous in tone and free from vicious meaning; and that if they do not make the reader better, they certainly do not make him worse. Nor are they so wearisome as might be supposed. The incidents are often ingenious, and the narrative frequently assumes a picturesque character. The reader can always skip the conversations, which, however, are scarcely more artificial than Richardson's. We confess to having derived some amusement from the pages of the 'Grand Cyrus,' and if any one blame us for our taste, are prepared to take shelter under the example of Madame de Sévigné.

But all Lady Mary's hours were not given up to intellectual pursuits. She had to learn the fashionable accomplishments of riding and dancing, and no small part of the supervision of the paternal establishment at Thoresby fell to her share. As soon as she was strong enough, and physical strength was absolutely requisite for the post, she presided

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at the Marquis's table. The mistress of a country house, as Lady Louisa Stuart (Lady Mary's granddaughter) reminds us, had not only to persuade and provoke her guests to eat voraciously, but to carve every dish, when chosen, with her own hands. The higher her rank, the more indispensable was this onerous duty. Each joint was placed before her in turn, to be operated upon by her, and her alone. The lords and squires on either hand were not allowed to offer her any assistance. The master of the house, seated opposite to her, might not act as her croupier; his function being to push the bottle after dinner. As for the crowd of guests who sat below the salt, the most inconsiderable among them, the squire's younger brother, the chaplain who mumbled prayers and took the vacant hand at whist, the curate in rusty cassock from the neighbouring village, or the subaltern from the nearest military station, if suffered through her neglect to help himself to a slice of the mutton that steamed at his end of the board, would have digested it as an affront, and gone home in dudgeon, half inclined to vote the wrong way at the next election. There were then professional carving-masters, who taught young ladies the art scientifically, and from one of these Lady Mary

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received instruction thrice a week, so as to be perfect on her father's public days. On which occasions, that she might discharge her duties without let or hindrance, she was compelled to eat her own dinner alone an hour or two beforehand. How she would have rejoiced in the modern invention of *diners à la Russe!*

Lady Mary was not without the solace of female friendship. Among her choice friends and correspondents were some distinguished by their rank, beauty, or accomplishments; Mrs. Smith, the daughter of the Whig Speaker Smith, and maid of honour to Queen Anne; the charming Lady Walpole, sister of the great Statesman; and the famous heiress, Lady Anne Vaughan, the only child of Lord Carberry, the last of a family honourably famous for having provided Jeremy Taylor with an asylum at Golden Grove. Lady Anne lived to be the broken-hearted wife of the third Duke of Bolton; well-known in theatrical annals, as afterwards the lover and husband of Lavinia Fenton, the brilliant "Polly Peachem" of Gay's 'Beggar's Opera.' But her dearest friend and chief confidante was Mistress Anne Wortley Montagu, to whom her earliest letters

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are addressed. As a proof of her skill in letter-writing, and of its early development, we quote one which bears the date of August 8th, 1709. It gives us some insight into her occupations and her character; and one is inclined to ask where she learned to write such elegant and vigorous English.

"I shall run mad—with what heart can people write, when they believe their letters will never be received? I have already writ you a very long scrawl, but it seems it never came to your hands; I cannot bear to be accused of coldness by one whom I shall love all my life. This will, perhaps, miscarry as the last did; how unfortunate am I if it does! You will think I forgot you, who are never out of my thoughts. You will fancy me stupid enough to neglect your letters, when they are the only pleasures of my solitude: in short, you will call me ungrateful and insensible, when I esteem you as I ought, in esteeming you above all the world. If I am not quite so unhappy as I imagine, and you do receive this, let me know it as soon as you can, for till then I shall be in terrible uneasiness, and let me beg you for the future, if you do not receive letters very constantly from me, imagine the post-boy killed, imagine the mail burnt, or some other

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strange accident; you can imagine nothing so impossible as that I forgot you, my dear Mrs. Wortley.* I know no pretence I have to your good opinion but by heartily desiring it; I wish I had that imagination you talk of, to render me a fitter correspondent for you, who can write so well on every thing. I am now so much alone, I have leisure to pass whole days in reading, but am not at all proper for so delicate an employment as choosing you books. Your own fancy will better direct you. My study at present is nothing but dictionaries and grammars. I am trying whether it be possible to learn without a master; I am not certain (I dare hardly hope) I shall make any great progress; but I find the study so diverting, I am not only easy, but pleased with the solitude that indulges it. I forget there is such a place as London, and wish for no company but yours. You see, my dear, in making my pleasures consist of these unfashionable diversions, I am not of the number who cannot be easy out of the mode. I believe more follies are committed out of complaisance to the

* It is almost unnecessary to remind the reader that unmarried ladies were then addressed by the title of "Mistress."

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world, than in following our own inclinations. Nature is seldom in the wrong, custom always; it is with some regret I follow it in all the impertinencies of dress; the complaisance is so trivial that it comforts me; but I am amazed to see it consulted even in the most important occasions of our lives; and that people of good sense in other things can make their happiness consist in the opinions of others, and sacrifice everything in the desire of appearing in fashion. I call all people who fall in love with furniture, or clothes, and equipage, of this number, and I look upon them as no less in the wrong than when they were five years old, and doated on shells, pebbles, and hobby-horses. I believe you will expect this letter to be dated from the other world, for sure I am you never heard an inhabitant of this talk so before. I suppose you expect, too, I should conclude with begging pardon for this extreme, tedious, and very nonsensical letter; quite contrary, I think you will be obliged to me for it. I could not better show my great concern for your reproaching me with a neglect I know myself innocent of, than proving myself mad in these pages."

Mistress Wortley had a brother named Edward,

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who, in spite of the common representation of him as a phlegmatic and morose country gentleman of bucolic tastes and ordinary parts, seems to have been really endowed with very considerable abilities, which he had cultivated with equal success and assiduity. He had a clear sound judgment and a strong understanding. For the frivolous pursuits of the fine gentlemen of his day, described so airily in Pope's most charming poem, who

> "In various talk th' instructive hours they past,
> Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
> One speaks the glory of the British queen,
> And one describes a charming Indian screen;
> A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
> At every word a reputation dies.
> Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat.
> With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that. . . ."

Mr. Wortley Montagu had a supreme contempt. He wrote verse; he read the *belles lettres;* and he affected the society of Addison, Garth, Sir Richard Steele, and Congreve. Such a man was necessarily something of a misogynist. He could care little for the company of ladies who could play cards unweariedly, and circulate scandal dexterously, but

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read little and thought less. Lounging one day, however, in the apartment of his sister, whom he warmly loved, a visitor was announced, and thus he made the acquaintance of Lady Mary Pierrepont. Her beauty he was forced to acknowledge at the first glance; that this was the least of her attractions he was ready to own after an animated conversation. For here was a woman who understood Latin and had translated Epictetus; a woman who had opinions, and expressed them in English not less accurate than lively! His astonishment was great, and so was his pleasure. Finding that she had not read Quintus Curtius, an author whom even the learned ladies of the Victorian age probably ignore, he sent her a "superb edition" a few days afterwards, with these lines inscribed on the fly-leaf:—

"Beauty like this had vanquished Persia shown,
The Macedon had laid his empire down,
And polished Greece obeyed a barb'rous throne.
Had wit so bright adorned a Grecian dame,
The am'rous youth had lost his thirst for fame,
Nor distant India sought through Syria's plain;
But to the Muses' shame with her had run,
And thought her lover more than Ammon's son."

A love-story which begins with 'Quintus Curtius,'

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and so exquisite a compliment in heroic couplets, is, we protest, well worth the reader's attention. The heart of young Mr. Wortley was really moved; his fancy soon developed into a genuine passion; and he sought every opportunity of convincing Lady Mary of his sincerity. He was fortunate in securing the good offices of his sister, who pressed his suit with as much earnestness as if she had changed her sex, and been wooing for herself. To maintain a proper fervour in a man's love, a little jealousy is indispensable; and from the following letter, this does not appear to have been wholly wanting:—

"My dear Mrs. Wortley," writes the beauty, September 5th, 1709, "you have read that a man who, with patience, hears himself called heretic, can never be esteemed a good Christian. To be capable of preferring the despicable wretch you mention to Mr. Wortley, is as ridiculous—if not as criminal—as forsaking the Deity to worship a calf. Don't tell me anybody ever had so mean an opinion of my inclinations; 'tis among the number of those things I would forget. My tenderness is always built upon my esteem, and when the foundation perishes, it falls."

Mrs. Wortley replies in language evidently dictated by her brother; for it is barely possible to believe that

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one woman in writing to another would inform her that she could no more utter a dull thought than put on a look that was not beautiful! Or would gravely assure her that she was "altogether perfect." She continues: "'Tis to this happy disposition of being pleased with a variety of new objects, that we owe that wit of yours, which is so surprising; and to this alone I am indebted for the irrepressible delight in the present enjoyment of your favour; and it would be extravagant in me to call it either your fault or my misfortune. I wish the most happy person now in being,"—her brother,—"whom I have often discovered to be so, in spite of your art to hide it, may be as able to make this reflection at the Nottingham race as I, who am not subdued by so strong a passion of that sort. . . . Such passions as these, where there is an object like Lady Mary, leave no room for cool reflections; and I wish he may not be so far overcome by his fears for the future, as to forget what a favourite of fortune he is in the present possession of so great a bliss."

The course of true love thus ran very smoothly; but Lady Mary's affections were not so wholly absorbed as to beguile her from her favourite pursuits. We find her in July, 1710, forwarding her translation of 'Epictetus' to Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury,

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and accompanying it with a letter, which is in every way remarkable. Certainly, few women of her time, and perhaps none at twenty years of age, could have written more tersely or with more good sense, while it would be difficult to point to any who had conceived so high an idea of female education. "My sex," she writes, "is usually forbid studies of this nature, and folly reckoned so much our proper sphere that we are sooner pardoned any excesses of that, than the least pretensions to reading or good sense. We are permitted no books but such as tend to the weakening and effeminating of the mind. Our natural defects are every way indulged, and it is looked upon, as in a degree criminal, to improve our reason, or fancy we have any. We are taught to place all our art in adorning our outward forms, and permitted, without reproach, to carry that custom even to extravagancy; while our minds are entirely neglected, and, by disuse of reflection, filled with nothing but the trifling objects our eyes are daily entertained with. This custom, so long established and industriously upheld, makes it more ridiculous to go out of the common road, and forces one to find as many excuses, as if it were a thing altogether criminal, not to play the fool in concert with other women of quality, whose birth and leisure

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only serve to render them the most useless and most worthless part of the creation. There is hardly a character in the world more despicable, or more liable to universal ridicule, than that of a learned woman; these words imply, according to the received sense, a talking, impertinent, vain, and conceited creature. I believe that nobody will deny that learning may have this effect, but it must be a very superficial degree of it. Erasmus was certainly a man of great learning, and good sense, and he seems to have my opinion of it, when he says, *Fœmina quæ vere sapit, non videtur sibi sapere; contra, quæ cum nihil sapiat sibi videtur sapere, ea demum bis stulta est.*" Many of Lady Mary's contemporaries of her own sex could have written as learnedly, or could have puzzled Bishop Burnet as readily with displays of Latin or Hebrew; but none could have written more sensibly, and none had formed a juster conception of woman's true sphere and reasonable claims. And we must look for the clue to much that was strange and perplexing in her later life, to much that was wayward in conduct and audacious in expression, to this attitude of hostility which she assumed at the outset to the commonly received notion of woman's place in society. Throughout her career she was the champion, to some degree the martyr, of

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her sex. Her strong intellect, which, had it been more sympathetic, might have expanded into genius, revolted against the social tyranny that restricted woman to the narrowest possible circle of occupations, that degraded her into the slave of fashion, and provided her with no field for the exercise of her choicest gifts. In this respect she was in advance of her age; and hence much of the contumely with which her age loaded her. Lady Mary, however, would have had no patience with the loud-tongued advocates of "Woman's Rights," who have recently wearied the public by their brazen eloquence. She writes to Bishop Burnet:—"I am not now arguing for an equality of the two sexes. I do not doubt but that God and nature have thrown us into an inferior rank; we are a lower part of the creation, we owe obedience and submission to the superior sex, and any woman who suffers her vanity and folly to deny this, rebels against the law of the Creator and indisputable order of nature; but there is a worse effect than this, which follows the careless education given to women of quality, its being so easy for any man of sense, that finds it either his interest or his pleasure, to corrupt them. The common method is to begin by attacking their religion; they bring them a thousand fallacious

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arguments, while their excessive ignorance hinders them from replying; and, I speak now from my own knowledge and conversation among them, there are more Atheists among the fine ladies than the loosest sort of rakes; and the same ignorance that generally works out into excess of superstition, exposes them to the snare of any who have a fancy to carry them to t'other extreme."

Mrs. Mary Wortley died in 1710, and thereafter Lady Mary and her lover entered into direct correspondence with each other. But the death of the sister had an ill effect on the brother's suit. Lady Mary, relieved from the influence of her friend, was able to examine more closely her own heart and her lover's disposition. She became convinced that she esteemed and respected rather than loved him, and that there were points in his character, as well as in her own, which were ill-adapted to preserve the tranquillity of a life-long connection. His letters show that he was animated by a strong and deep attachment, which frequently tempted him to outbreaks of jealous irritability or fits of depression; hers are colder in tone, and more constrained in expression, and bear witness to a conviction that they were not suited

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for each other. So this man of admirable parts and this strong-minded woman quarrelled about trifles like the most commonplace of lovers; continually threatening to renounce their pledges, and invariably ending in a reconciliation. The reader will probably wish for a specimen of Lady Mary's love-letters:—

"I intended," she writes to Mr. Wortley Montagu, "to make no answer to your letter; it was something very ungrateful, and I resolved to give over all thoughts of you. I could easily have performed that resolve some time ago, but then you took pains to please me; now you have brought me to esteem you, you make use of that esteem to give me uneasiness, and I have the displeasure of seeing I esteem a man that dislikes me. Farewell, then, since you will have it so; I renounce all the ideas I have so long flattered myself with, and will entertain my fancy no longer with the imaginary pleasure of pleasing you. How much wiser are all those women I have despised than myself! In placing their happiness in trifles, they have placed it in what is attainable. I fondly thought fine clothes and gilt coaches, balls, operas, and public adoration, rather the fatigues of life; and that true happiness was justly defined by

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Mr. Dryden (pardon the romantic air of repeating verses), when he says,

> "Whom Heav'n would bless it does from pomp remove,
> And makes their wealth in privacy and love."

These notions had corrupted my judgment as much as Mrs. Biddy Tipkins. According to this scheme, I proposed to pass my life with you. I yet do you the justice to believe if any man could have been contented with this manner of living, it would have been you. Your indifference to me does not hinder me from thinking you capable of tenderness and the happiness of friendship; but I find it is not in me you'll ever have them; you think me all that is detestable; you accuse me of want of sincerity and generosity. To convince you of your mistake, I'll show you the last extremes of both.

"While I foolishly fancied you loved me (which, I confess, I had never any great reason for, more than that I wished it), there is no condition of life I could not have been happy in with you, so very much I liked you—I might say loved, since it is the last thing I'll ever say to you. This is telling you sincerely my greatest weakness; and now I will oblige you with a new proof of generosity—I'll never see you

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more. I shall avoid all public places; and this is the last letter I shall send. If you write, be not displeased if I send it back unopened. I shall force my inclinations to oblige yours; and remember then you have told me I could not oblige you more than by refusing you. Had I intended ever to see you again, I durst not have sent this letter."

The reader will be disposed to say, that if she had *not* intended "to see him again," she would not have written this letter. Its polished phrases and epigrammatic sentences are not the offspring of a wounded pride or rejected love. There is no *passion* in the letter; there is plenty of "head," but no "heart." It is the letter of a clever woman who admires and esteems the man to whom she writes; does not wish to lose him, yet cares very little about retaining him; is conscious she does not love him, and yet feels a certain attraction towards him. True passion is not so solicitous about the choice of an epithet or the turn of a period. Indeed one wonders, when reading the literature of the Queen Anne period, whether the blood ran as warmly in the veins of our ancestors as it does in our own, whether the heart was ever allowed to follow its impulses, and whether love

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was ever anything more than a stage-play or a pretty pastoral. We must go elsewhere to obtain evidence of the fact that our great grandfathers and great grandmothers loved and hated, were jealous and revengeful, faithful and disloyal, much as we do and are. After all, it is not the passion that changes, but the expression of it.

Let us now see what sort of figure in this genteel comedy was played by Mr. Montagu. Here is a letter addressed to his capricious beauty, and dated Saturday morning. Did he spring from an uneasy couch, after a night of anxieties and doubts, to write it?

"Every time you see me, gives me a fresh proof of your not caring for me; yet I beg you will meet me once more. How could you pay me that great compliment of your loving the country for life, when you would not stay with me a few minutes longer? Who is the happy man you went to? I agree with you, I am often so dull I cannot explain my meaning; but will not own that the expression was so very obscure, when I said if I had you I should act against my opinion. Why, need I add, I see what is best for me, I condemn what I do, and yet I fear I must do it. If you can't find it out, that you are going to be unhappy, ask your sister, who agrees with you in everything

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else, and she will convince you of your rashness in this. She knows you don't care for me, and that you will like me less and less every year; perhaps every day of your life. You may, with a little care, please another as well, and make him less timorous. It is possible I too may please some of those that have but little acquaintance; and if I should be preferred by a woman for being the first among her companions, it would give me as much pleasure as if I were the first man in the world. Think again, and prevent a misfortune from falling on both of us.

"When you are at leisure, I shall be as ready to end all, as I was last night, when I disobliged one that will do me hurt, by crossing his desires, rather than fail of meeting you. Had I imagined you would have left me without finishing, I had not seen you. Now you have been so free before Mrs. Steele,—[That is, the "dear Prue" of Mr. (afterwards Sir Richard) Steele, the accomplished and genial *Tatler*]—you may call upon her, or send for her to-morrow or next day. Let her dine with you, or go to visit shops, Hyde Park, or other diversions. You may bring her home, I can be in the house, reading, as I often am, though the master is abroad. If you will have her visit you first, I will get her to go to-

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morrow. I think a man, or a woman, is under no engagement till the writings are sealed; but it looks like indiscretion even to begin a treaty without a probability of concluding it. When you hear of all my objections to you, and to myself, you will resolve against me. Last night you were much upon the reserve; I see you can never be thoroughly intimate with me; 'tis because you have no pleasure in it. You can be easy, and complaisant, as you have sometimes told me; but never think that enough to make me easy, unless you refuse me.

"Write a line this evening, or early to-morrow. If I don't speak plain, do you understand what I write? Tell me how to mend the style, if the fault is in that. If the characters are not plain, I can easily mend them. I always comprehend your expressions, but would give a great deal to know what passes in your heart.

"In you I might possess youth, beauty, and all things that can charm. It is possible that they may strike me less, after a time; but I may then consider I have once enjoyed them in perfection; that they would have decayed as soon in any other. You see this is not your case. You will think you might have been happier. Never engage with a man, unless you pro-

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pose to yourself the highest satisfaction from him and none other."

It is impossible not to perceive that there is a touch of genuine feeling in the foregoing letter; but somehow or other it impresses us disagreeably. The writer betrays a moroseness of disposition, not to say a churlishness, which may well have suggested to Lady Mary some apprehensions for her future happiness. But it may very well be that none of us, reader, would appear to advantage if our love-letters were brought out of their secret receptacles, and exposed to the criticism of the public. We, too, have had—have we not?—our fits of jealousy and suspicions when Phillis smiled for a moment upon Alexis, or seemed to listen to the airy nothings of Melibœus. It is surely unwise for men and women to preserve these missives, once so precious, which, written in the heyday of youthful passion, were never intended to be scanned by indifferent eyes. They should be offered up as a sacrifice to the memories of the vanished and irrecoverable Past. True it is, we suppose, that the love-letters of to-day are couched in a very different language from that of the *billets* of the beaux and belles of the reign of the First George. Our epistolary style has grown as negligent as our garb. Perhaps there is a mysterious relation between them.

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Is it too fanciful to conjecture that a man in a shooting-jacket and knickerbockers, will necessarily write with careless ease and irregular freedom? We declare for ourselves that if we wanted to imitate the aristocratical style and learned composition of the Herveys and the Montagus, we should first encase our nether limbs in breeches and silk stockings, adorn our wrists with ruffles of Mechlin lace, and mount a Steinkirk cravat and a perruque! However this may be, we doubt whether many people nowadays write love-letters so well worth reading as those of Lady Mary and her suitor.

We advance another stage in the long courtship in the following letter from Lady Mary. It is without date, but must have been written towards the close of 1711, and after Mr. Montagu, having proposed to her and been accepted, had addressed himself to her father. We must note that at first the Marquis received him very graciously; but when the settlements came to be considered, a rupture occurred.

The practice of "a man's entailing his estate upon his eldest son while as yet an unborn child," had been recently ridiculed with uncommon force by the wits of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*; and Mr. Wortley, having adopted the opinions of his friends, persisted in refusing to settle, as the Marquis desired, his landed property

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upon a son who, for aught he knew, might prove wholly unworthy of it. On the other hand, Lord Dorchester swept aside the theories of the essayists with the declaration that *his* grandchildren should not run the risk of being left beggars; and bade his daughter accept the offers of another suitor, who was prepared to accept any terms her father named, and to lay himself and his fortune at her feet.

It was in these romantic circumstances that she wrote to Mr. Montagu as follows:

"I would see you if I could (though perhaps it may be wrong); but, in the way that I am here, 'tis impossible. I can't come to town, but in company with my sister-in-law; I can carry her nowhere, but where she pleases; or, if I could, I would trust her with nothing. I could not walk out alone, without giving suspicion to the whole family; should I be watched, and seen to meet a man—judge of the consequences!

"You speak of treating with my father, as if you believed he would come to terms afterwards. I will not suffer you to remain in the thought, however advantageous it might be to me; I will deceive you in nothing. I am fully persuaded he will never hear of terms afterwards. You may say, 'tis talking oddly of him. I can't answer to that; but 'tis my

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real opinion, and I think I know him. You talk to me of estates, as if I was the most interested woman in the world. Whatever faults I may have shown in my life, I know not one action of it that ever proved me mercenary. I think there cannot be a greater proof to the contrary than my treating with you, when I am to depend entirely upon your generosity, at the same time that I may have settled upon me £500 per annum, pin-money, and a considerable jointure, in another place, not to reckon that I may have by his temper what command of his estate I please; and with you I have nothing to pretend to. I do not, however, make a merit to you; money is very little to me, because all beyond necessaries I do not value, that is to be purchased by it. If the man proposed to me had £10,000 per annum, and I was sure to dispose of it all, I should act just as I do. I have in my life known a good deal of show, and never found myself the happier for it. . ."

Evidently, her father's opposition had strengthened Lady Mary's attachment to her somewhat wayward suitor; but her feelings nowise weakened her judgment, and she was able to reason with what to Mr. Wortley was probably a provoking calmness. Thus she continues:—

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"If we marry, our happiness must consist in loving one another: 'tis principally my concern to think of the most probable method of making that love eternal. [Lady Mary, it is clear, had not read the romances of Madame Scudery for nothing!] You object against living in London; I am not fond of it myself, and readily give it up to you; though I am assured there needs more art to keep a fondness alive in solitude, when it generally preys upon itself. There is one article absolutely necessary—to be ever beloved, one must be ever agreeable. There is no such thing as being agreeable, without a thorough good humour, a natural sweetness of temper, enlivened by cheerfulness. Whatever natural funds of gaiety one is born with, 'tis necessary to be entertained with agreeable objects. Anybody capable of tasting pleasure, when they confine themselves to one place, should take care 'tis the place in the world the most agreeable. Whatever you may now think (now, perhaps, you have some fondness for me), though your love should continue in its full force, there are times when the most beloved mistress would be troublesome. People are not for ever (nor is it in human nature that they should be) disposed to be fond; you would be glad to find in me the friend and the companion."

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Lady Mary now sets aside altogether the lover's view of marriage, and relapses into the social essayist. The following passage might have figured with credit in one of the elegantly-written periodicals that were then the delight of good society :—

"Very few people that have settled entirely in the country, but have grown at length weary of one another. The lady's conversation generally falls into a thousand impertinent effects of idleness: and the gentleman falls in love with his dogs and his horses, and *out* of love with everything else. I am not now arguing in favour of the town; you have answered me as to that point. In respect of your health, 'tis the first thing to be considered, and I shall never ask you to do anything injurious to that. But 'tis my opinion, 'tis necessary to be happy, that we, neither of us, think any place more agreeable than that where we are."

The letter concludes in a somewhat different, but not less artificial strain :—

"If 'tis necessary for your affairs to stay in England, to assist your father in his business; as I suppose the time will be short, I would be as little injurious to your fortune as I can, and I will do it. But I am still of opinion nothing is so likely to make us both happy,

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as what I propose. I foresee I may break with you on this point, and I shall certainly be displeased with myself for it, and wish a thousand times that I had done whatever you pleased; but, however, I hope I shall always remember how much more miserable than anything else would make me, should I be to live with you, and to please you no longer. You can be pleased with nothing when you are not pleased with your wife. One of the *Spectators* is very just that says, 'A man ought always to be upon his guard against spleen, and a too severe philosophy; a woman, against levity and coquetry.' If we go to Naples, I will make no acquaintance there of any kind, and you will be in a place where a variety of agreeable objects will dispose you to be ever pleased. If such a thing is possible, this will secure our everlasting happiness; and I am ready to wait on you without leaving a thought behind me."

Meantime, affairs at home did not become smoother. The Marquis persisted in his opposition to a son-in-law who might cut off his grandson with a shilling; Lady Mary in her refusal to accept a suitor for whom she did not entertain the slightest esteem. The father was indignant at her presumption

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in seeking to choose for herself; and coldly informed her that unless she acquiesced in *his* selection, he would not give her a single sixpence for her dowry. She then expressed her determination not to marry at all; but this announcement the Marquis met with an intimation that she would be immediately despatched to some remote place in the country, to reside there during his life, and that at his death she would receive no portion but a moderate annuity. Fathers were unaccustomed in those days to filial disobedience; and believing that she would finally yield, he proceeded to make all the necessary preparations for her marriage. The day was fixed, the wedding-clothes were purchased; the settlements were drawn up; when Lady Mary terminated the comedy by eloping with Mr. Montagu. They were privately married by special licence on the 12th of August, 1712.

It is not difficult to imagine the Marquis's rage; but it is stranger to be told that Lady Frances, afraid lest he should be induced to examine her sister's papers, and apprehending that he might find there matter which would increase his anger, hastily burned all she could lay hands upon, including a diary which Lady Mary had kept for some years, and was

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reluctant to lose. One wonders what a daughter could write that should be of so dangerous a nature? Did she venture upon caricaturing the Marquis himself?

Soon after her marriage she resumed the practice of writing a journal, and continued it as long as she lived. In the course of time it filled many volumes. Lady Bute, we are told, who knew nothing of it till it came into her possession a few days before her mother's death, always kept it under lock and key. Sometimes she read passages from it aloud to her daughters and friends, but she could not be prevailed upon to spare it out of her own hands, nor would she consent to publish it. Towards the close of her life, she acted on a frequently-expressed intention, and solemnly burned it; thereby inflicting on posterity a very serious injury. The excuse given for this Erastotratus-like act seems to us insufficient. "Though she always spoke of Lady Mary with great respect," says her daughter, the Lady Louisa Stuart; "yet it might be perceived that she knew it had been too much her custom to note down and enlarge upon all the scandalous rumours of the day, without weighing their truth or even their probability; to record as certain facts stories that

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perhaps sprung up like mushrooms from the dirt, and had as brief an existence, but tended to defame persons of the most spotless character." Obviously, however, a little editorial care would have prevented these from appearing; and we cannot but feel a certain regret at the loss of such valuable *Mémoires pour servir*, when we read that the volumes comprised the years immediately succeeding Lady Mary's marriage—1713, 1714, 1715; and also the time of Mr. Wortley's embassy. "What passed every day was set down; often only in a line, or half a line, as thus: 'Stayed at home alone—went to such a place—saw such a person': so that frequently three or four weeks took up but a single page. Sometimes, again, an occurrence or a conversation would be given at very great length; sometimes despatched with one sharp sentence, like the following humorous application of speech in Dryden's *Spanish Friar:* 'Lady Hinchinbroke has a dead daughter—it were unchristian not to be sorry for my cousin's misfortune; but if she has no live son, Mr. Wortley is heir—so there's comfort for a Christian.'"

We could have better spared many better books than Lady Mary's Diary.

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II.

How Mr. Wortley and his bride spent their honeymoon, we shall never know. The Diary would probably have told us whether Lady Mary's prognostications were in anywise fulfilled. Parliamentary business seems soon to have called Mr. Wortley to London; and his young wife, instead of accompanying him, went on a visit to some friends at Walling Wells, in Nottinghamshire. Thence she addressed a letter to her husband, which, while retaining the liveliness of her former correspondence, breathes a spirit of deeper and more genuine regard, and induces us to believe that the honeymoon passed without any clouds:—

"I have not been very long in this family; and I fancy myself in that described in the *Spectator*. The good people here look upon their children with a fondness that more than recompenses their care of them. I don't perceive much distinction in regard

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to their merits; and when they speak sense or nonsense, it affects the parents with almost the same pleasure. My friendship for the mother and kindness for Miss Biddy, make me endure the squalling of Miss Nanny and Miss Mary with abundance of patience; and my foretelling the future conquests of the eldest daughter makes me very well with the family. I don't know whether you will presently find out, that this seeming impertinent account is the tenderest expression of my love to you. But it furnishes my imagination with agreeable pictures of our future life; and I flatter myself with the hopes of one day enjoying with you the same satisfaction; and that, after as many years together, I may see you retain the same fondness for me as I shall certainly do for you, when the noise of a nursery may have more charms for us than the music of an opera.

"Amusements such as these are the sure effect of my sincere love, since 'tis the nature of the passion to entertain the mind with pleasures in prospect, and I check myself, when I grieve for your absence, by remembering how much reason I have to rejoice in the hope of passing my whole life with you. A good fortune not to be valued! I

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am afraid of telling you that I return thanks for it to Heaven, because you will charge me with hypocrisy, but you are mistaken. I assist every day at public prayers in this family, and never forget in my private ejaculations how much I owe to Heaven for making me yours. . . . 'Tis candle-light, or I should not conclude so soon. Pray, my love, begin at the top, and read till you come to the bottom."

In another letter we find that Lord Pierrepont, her great-uncle, has declared in favour of the newly married couple; and that the accomplished Lord Halifax, the object of so much poetic adulation, and a man of brilliant parts which went far to justify it, had promised to intercede with the unforgiving Marquis. Next we meet with her at Hinchinbroke, the seat of Lord Sandwich, which was doubtlessly convenient from its proximity to Huntingdon, the town that sent Mr. Wortley to Parliament. Then indications crowd upon us of clouds on the young wife's sky. Apparently her husband delayed in London; wrote seldom, and when he did write, wrote querulously. "I am alone," she complains, "without any amusement to take up my thoughts.

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I am in circumstances in which melancholy is apt to prevail even over all amusements, dispirited and alone, and you write me quarrelling letters. I hate complaining," she continues; "'tis no sign I am easy that I do not trouble you with my headaches, and my spleen; to be reasonable one should never complain but when one hopes redress. A physician should be the only confidant of bodily pains; and for pains of the mind, they should never be spoke of but to them that can and will relieve 'em. Should I tell you that I am uneasy, that I am out of humour, and out of patience, should I see you half an hour the sooner?" The letter-writer's earnestness prevails now over her desire to show her epistolary skill. There is none of that indifference, or that hesitating attachment, which formerly characterised her effusions. Husband and wife seem almost to have changed places; and the latter is now the suppliant and suitor. In the following we discover no trace of artificial phraseology; all is natural and sincere; and no one can read the impassioned little missive without a touch of sympathy. We give it *in extenso*:—

"I am at present in so much uneasiness, my letter is not likely to be intelligible, if it at all resembles the

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confusion of my head. I sometimes imagine you not well, and sometimes that you think it of small importance to write, or that greater matters have taken up your thoughts. This last imagination is too cruel for me. I will rather fancy your letter has miscarried, though I find little probability to think so. I know not what to think, and am near being distracted, amongst my variety of apprehensions. I am very ill company to the good people of the house, who all bid me make you their compliments. Mr. White inquires your health twice every day. You don't deserve all this if you can be so entirely forgetful of all this part of the world. I am peevish with you by fits, and divide my time between anger and sorrow, which are equally troublesome to me. 'Tis the most cruel thing in the world, to think one has reason to complain of what one loves. How can you be so careless? is it because you don't love writing? You should remember I want to know you are safe at Durham. I shall imagine you have had some fall from your horse, or ill accident by the way, without regard to probability; there is nothing too extravagant for a woman's and a lover's fears. Did you receive my last letter? If you did not, the direction is wrong, you won't receive this, and my question is in vain.

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I find I begin to talk nonsense, and 'tis time to leave off. Pray, my dear, write to me, or I shall be very mad."

In 1713, Lady Mary's sister Frances, married the Earl of Mar, then Secretary of State for Scotland. The match did not recommend itself to Lady Mary, on account, perhaps, of Lord Mar's political tendencies. At all events, her apprehensions of misfortune were justified by the event, when Mar joined the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, and sacrificed his fame, fortune, and life in a hopeless cause. This ill-omened marriage was quickly followed by the death of her brother, Lord Kingston. He died of the disease which then slew so many thousands, small-pox; a minor, though both a husband and a father; a young man of amiable disposition, and devotedly attached to his brilliant sister. She felt his loss severely, and to her husband she writes,—"I have been to-day at Acton, to see my brother's melancholy family. I cannot describe how much it has sunk my spirits. . . . If I lose you—I cannot bear that *if*;—which I bless God is without probability; but since the loss of my poor unhappy brother, I dread every evil." Her zeal for inoculation, at a later period,

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was probably quickened by her painful recollection of the cause of her brother's untimely death.

A son, destined to a melancholy history, was born to Mr. Montagu in 1713. According to the evil custom of the time, the child was put out to nurse; but his mother appears to have felt for him a truly maternal affection. "I thank God," she writes to her husband, "this cold [weather] agrees very well with the child; and he seems stronger and better every day. But I shall be very glad if you send Dr. Garth,* if you would ask his opinion concerning the use of cold baths for young children. I hope you love the child as well as I do; but if you love me at all, you'll desire the preservation of his health, for I should certainly break my heart for him."

For the first three years after their marriage, Mr. Montagu and his wife had no settled residence. They were sometimes at Hinchinbroke, sometimes at Huntingdon, sometimes at furnished houses in different parts of Yorkshire; and occasionally at Wharncliffe Lodge, near Sheffield, the seat of her father-in-law.

In the beginning of 1714, she was at Middlethorpe

* A popular physician and versifier; author of 'The Dispensary.'

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in the neighbourhood of Bishopsthorpe and York, and thence she wrote to her husband, whom parliamentary duties detained in London :—

"The Archbishop of York," she says, "has been come to Bishopsthorpe but three days. I went with my cousin to-day to see the king (George I.) proclaimed, which was done; the archbishop walking next the lord mayor, and all the country gentry following, with greater crowds of people than I believed to be in York, vast acclamations, and the appearance of a general satisfaction. The Pretender afterwards dragged about the streets, and burned. Ringing of bells, bonfires, and illuminations; the mob crying Liberty and Property! and long live King George! This morning all the principal men of any figure took post for London, and we are alarmed with the fear of attempts from Scotland, though all the Protestants here seem unanimous for the Hanover succession. The poor young ladies at Castle Howard (the seat of the Earl of Carlisle) are as much alarmed as I am, being left all alone without any hopes of seeing their father again (though things should prove well) over eight or nine months. They have sent to desire me very earnestly to come to them, and bring my boy; 'tis the same thing as pensioning in a

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nunnery, for no mortal man ever enters the doors in the absence of their father, who is gone post. During this uncertainty, I think it will be a safe retreat, for Middlethorpe stands exposed to plunderers, if there be any at all. I dare say, after the zeal the archbishop has showed, they'll visit his house (and consequently this) in the first place. The archbishop made me many compliments on our near neighbourhood, and said he should be overjoyed at the happiness of improving his acquaintance with you. I suppose you may now come in at Aldburgh, and I heartily wish you were in parliament. I saw the archbishop's list of the Lords Regent appointed, and perceive Lord W. is not one of them; by which I guess the new scheme is not to make use of any man grossly infamous in either party; consequently, those that have been honest in regard to both, will stand fairest for preferment. You understand these things much better than I; but I hope you will be persuaded by me and your other friends (who I don't doubt will be of my opinion), that 'tis necessary for the common good, for an honest man to endeavour to be powerful, when he can be the one without losing the first more honourable title; and remember that money is the source of power."

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Through the influence of his friend, Lord Halifax, Mr. Wortley was appointed one of the Lords of the Treasury (October 13th, 1714), and it was confidently predicted that he would quickly attain to a prominent place in the Government; the reason given being, that he alone, with the exception, perhaps, of Lord Halifax, could speak French, and thus converse with the King, who could not speak English. This expectation, however, was baffled by the circumstance that George I., unlike his predecessors, did not preside at the council meetings; and all official business was transacted, therefore, through Sir Robert Walpole.

The following letter, dated September 24th, 1714, was written by Lady Mary before her husband's appointment to the Treasury. It illustrates her quickness of observation as well as her vivacity of language:—

"Though I am very impatient to see you, I would not have you, by hastening to come down, lose any part of your interest. I am surprised you say nothing of where you stand—I had a letter from Mrs. Hewet last post, who said she heard you stood at Newark, and would be chose without opposition; but I fear her intelligence is not at all to be depended on.

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I am glad you think of serving your friends; I hope it will put you in mind of serving yourself. I need not enlarge upon the advantages of money; everything we see, and everything we hear, puts us in remembrance of it. If it were possible to restore liberty to your country, or limit the encroachment of the prerogative, by reducing yourself to a garret, I should be pleased to share so glorious a poverty with you; but, as the world is and will be, 'tis a sort of duty to be rich, that it may be in one's power to do good; riches being another word for power, towards the obtaining of which the first necessary qualification is impudence, and (as Demosthenes said of pronunciation, in oratory) the second is impudence, and the third, still impudence. No modest man ever did, or ever will, make his fortune. Your friend, Lord Halifax, Robert Walpole, and all other remarkable instances of quick advancement, have been remarkably impudent. The Ministry is like a play at Court; there's a little door to get in, and a great crowd without, shoving and thrusting who shall be foremost; people who knock others with their elbows, disregard a little kick of the shins, and still thrust heartily forwards, are sure of a good place. Your modest man stands behind in the crowd, is shoved

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about by everybody, his clothes torn, almost squeezed to death, and sees a thousand get in before him, that don't make so good a figure as himself.

"I don't say it is impossible for an impudent man not to rise in the world; but a moderate merit, with a large share of impudence, is more probable to be advanced than the greatest qualification without it."

Thus we see that Lady Mary was developing rapidly into a Woman of Fashion; a woman with keen sensibilities and lively faculties, quick at repartee, prompt to detect the follies of the world, and not unwilling to turn them to advantage. Soon after her husband's promotion, she joined him in London. We know well enough, from the writings of the time, into what kind of Society she was thrown. The decorum and respectability which had prevailed during the reign of Anne, had given way on the accession of George I., to a coarse saturnalia of debauchery and dishonour, unrelieved, like that of Charles the Second's Court, by the sparkle of wit and the freshness of exuberant animal spirits. Society was corrupt to the core; and as vulgar and shameless as it was corrupt. Men and women of rank and breeding used

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language in their conversation with one another, which, nowadays, would scarcely be heard in the purlieus of the Haymarket and the Strand. Churchill, in his satire of 'The Times,' draws a terrible picture, which, there is good reason to believe, is not exaggerated in colouring. We dare not quote some of its darker passages; but the reader may judge what Society must have resembled, when the satirist could write as follows, and write unrebuked :—

"Would'st thou be safe? society forswear,
Fly to the desert, and seek shelter there;
Herd with the beast—they follow Nature's plan,
There's not one brute so dangerous as man.
In Afric's wilds, 'mongst them that refuge find,
Which lust denies thee here among mankind:
Renounce thy name, thy nature, and no more
Pique thy vain pride on manhood: on all four
Walk, as you see those honest creatures do,
And quite forget that once you walk'd on two.
But, if the thought of solitude alarm,
And social life hath one remaining charm;
If still thou art to jeopardy decreed,
Amongst the monsters of Augusta's breed,
Lay by thy sex, thy safety to procure,
Put off the man, from man to live secure;

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Go forth a woman to the public view,
And with their garb assume their manners too . . ."

Here is another specimen :—

"Where is the mother who thinks all her pain,
And all her jeopardy of travail, gain
When a man-child is born ; thinks every prayer
Paid to the full, and answer'd in an heir ?
Short-sighted woman ! little doth she know,
What streams of sorrow from that source may flow ;
Little suspect, while she surveys her boy,
Her young Narcissus, with an eye of joy,
Too full for continence, that Fate could give,
Her darling as a curse ; that she may live,
Ere sixteen winters their short course have run,
In agonies of soul, to curse that son."

Lord Chesterfield tells us that in the decent days of Queen Anne the shamelessness of public dissipation was impossible. Every woman of fashion kept, he says, what was called "a day," that is, a formal circle of her acquaintances of both sexes, unbroken by any card-tables, tea-tables, or other amusements. There the belles and beaux of society met, perhaps for an hour; and if they had anything particular to say to one another, it could be conveyed only by

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the language of the eyes. No woman of fashion could then receive a gentleman at her morning toilet without alarming her husband and his friends. But all difficulties in this direction," he adds, were "in a great measure removed by the arrival of the present royal family. King George I. loved pleasures, and was not delicate in the choice of them." No coarser or duller libertine ever sat upon the throne; and as the King, so was his Court. Society in England is generally what the Court makes it; and at this degraded period no salutary counter-influence was exercised by the Church, the leaders of which were steeped in worldliness.

Such being the nature of the social influences which surrounded Lady Mary, we need not wonder that some traces of them are apparent in her later correspondence. We need not wonder if Scandal should hint that they afterwards told upon her character and conduct. How far such an aspersion was correct we shall hereafter see. At all events, on her first mingling in the world of Fashion, no calumnious voices were busy with her name; though her wit, and her accomplishments, and her personal charms drew round her a large circle of admirers,

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including even the Prince of Wales, until he took offence at her political partialities. Lady Louisa Stuart hints that the Prince's admiration gave some slight umbrage to the Princess. On one occasion, the former called her Royal Highness from the card-table to see how becomingly Lady Mary was dressed. "Lady Mary always dresses well," replied the Princess drily, returning to her cards. She could hardly have said as much some years later, if there be any truth in Pope's famous satire.

Lady Mary's journal appears to have supplied many piquant anecdotes of the "manners and customs" of the Court of George I. On one occasion, having been invited to the Palace, she desired to leave unusually early in order to keep a particular engagement; and having explained her wishes to the Duchess of Kendal, the royal favourite, the latter informed the King, who, after a few complimentary remonstrances, apparently acquiesced. But when she began to take leave, he argued the point afresh, declaring it was unfair and perfidious to deprive him of her witty and agreeable conversation. She contrived, however, to escape; but at the foot

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of the great staircase ran against Mr. Secretary Craggs,* the friend of Pope,—

> "A soul, as full of worth as void of pride,
> Which nothing seeks to show, or needs to hide,
> Which nor to guilt nor fear its caution owes,
> And boasts a warmth that from no passion flows;
> A face untaught to feign; a judging eye,
> That darts severe upon a rising lie"—

who stopped her to enquire what was the matter? were the company just off? Lady Mary informed him why she went away, and how earnestly the King had pressed her to stay longer; possibly dwelling on that head with some small complacency. The Secretary said nothing; but suddenly snatching her up in his arms, as a nurse carries a child, ran upstairs with her full speed, deposited her within the ante-chamber, kissed both her hands respectfully, and, without a word, retreated. The pages, observing that she had returned, though they knew not how, flung open the inner doors; and, almost before she had recovered breath, she found herself again in the King's presence.

* Craggs in early life had been a footman: a circumstance of which the satirists of the period did not fail to take advantage.

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"*Ah, la re-voilà!*" cried he and the Duchess, extremely pleased, and loaded her with thanks for her obliging change of mind. The motto on all palace gates, said Lady Louisa Stuart, is "HUSH!" as Lady Mary very well knew. She was not ignorant that mystery and caution spread their awful wings over the precincts of a Court, where nobody knows how much mischief may be effected by the inadvertent or inopportune utterance of the wrong word at the right time, or the right word at the wrong time. But, in her excitement and confusion, she blurted out "Oh, Lord, sir! I have been so frightened," and told the whole story to his Majesty as she might have told it to meaner individuals. The King and his ladies had not recovered from their astonishment, when the attendants announced Mr. Secretary Craggs, who entered with the customary obeisance, and as composed an air as if he had never startled a beauty. "Mais comment donc, Monsieur Craggs," said the king, advancing to him, "est-ce que c'est l'usage de ce pays de porter des belles dames comme un sac de froment?" ("Is it the custom of this country to carry about fair ladies like a sack of wheat?") For a minute or two, the minister was struck dumb by this un-

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expected attack. Then, recovering his self-possession, he announced with a low bow, "There is nothing I would not do for your Majesty's satisfaction." Thus he came off with flying colours; but he took the earliest opportunity of administering to Lady Mary a severe rebuke for her indiscretion.

In 1716 Mr. Montagu received the reward of his faithful services to the ministry of the day in his appointment as Ambassador to Constantinople (June 5, 1716), with instructions to mediate between the Porte and the Emperor of Germany. He started in August, accompanied by his charming wife, whose affection was still strong enough to induce her to endure the inconveniences of travel and the discomforts of a prolonged residence in a semi-civilized city.

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III.

A HAPPY fortune has preserved for the delight of posterity the bright and entertaining letters, which, during her foreign sojourn, Lady Mary addressed to her sister, the Countess of Mar, to Lady Rich (Fenton's "seraphic Rich, with zeal serene"), Mrs. Thistlethwaite, and the poet Pope, whose acquaintance she had formed before leaving England, and on whom her beauty and her talents had produced a very strong impression. Of the accuracy of her descriptions, confirmatory evidence is easily obtained; of their vivacity and ease, the reader's judgment will convince him. She revealed to her contemporaries a world of which they were altogether ignorant; and even to this day, her sketches of Turkish life and Turkish manners may be perused almost as much for the information as for the entertainment they afford.

From Adrianople, in April, 1717, she wrote to Lady

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Rich, giving an account of her experience of a Turkish bath:—

"The bagnio," she says, "is built of stone, in the shape of a dome, with no windows but in the roof, which gives light enough. There were five of these domes joined together, the outmost being less than the rest, and serving only as a hall, where the portress stood at the door. Ladies of quality generally give this woman a crown or ten shillings; and I did not forget that ceremony. The next room is a very large one, paved with marble, and all round it are two raised sofas of marble, one above another. There were four fountains of cold water in this room, falling first into marble basins, and then running on the floor in little channels made for that purpose, which carried the streams into the next room, something less than this, with the same sort of marble sofas, but so hot with streams of sulphur proceeding from the baths joining to it, it was impossible to stay there with one's clothes on. The two other domes were the hot baths, one of which had cocks of cold water turning into it, to temper it to what degree of warmth the bathers pleased to have.

"I was in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to

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them. Yet there was not one of them that showed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, but received me with all the obliging civility possible. I know no European court, where the ladies would have behaved themselves in so polite a manner to such a stranger. I believe, upon the whole, there were two hundred women, and yet none of those disdainful smiles and satirical whispers that never fail in our assemblies, when anybody appears that is not dressed exactly in the fashion. They repeated over and over to me; 'Guzíl, pák guzíl,' which is nothing but *Charming, very charming.* The first sofas were covered with cushions and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies; and on the second, their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed. Yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them. They walked and moved with the same majestic grace, which Milton describes our general mother with. There were many amongst them, as exactly proportioned as ever any goddess was drawn by the pencil of a Guido or Titian, and most of their skins shiningly white, only adorned by their

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beautiful hair divided into many tresses, hanging on their shoulders, braided either with pearl or ribbons perfectly representing the figures of the Graces. . . .

"They generally take this diversion once a week and stay there at least four or five hours, without getting cold by immediately coming out of the hot bath into the cold room, which was very surprising to me. The lady that seemed the most considerable among them, entreated me to sit by her, and would fain have undressed me for the bath. I excused myself with some difficulty."

While residing at Pera, in February, 1718, she gave birth to a daughter, afterwards the Countess of Bute, who possessed much of her mother's talents and vivacity, but was inferior to her in personal charms. This incident did not affect Lady Mary's passion for sight-seeing, and in a month s time she was out and about, in quest of adventures, and paying a visit to the Sultana Hafitan, the favourite wife of the late Sultan Mustapha.

"I was led," she says, "into a large room, with a sofa the whole length of it, adorned with white marble pillars like a *ruelle*, covered with pale blue

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figured velvet on a silver ground, with cushions of the same, where I was desired to repose till the Sultana appeared, who had contrived this manner of reception to avoid rising up at my entrance, though she made me an inclination of her head when I rose up to her. I was very glad to observe a lady that had been distinguished by the favour of an Emperor, to whom beauties were, every day, presented from all parts of the world. But she did not seem to me to have ever been half so beautiful as the fair Fatima I saw at Adrianople, though she had the remains of a fine face, more decayed by sorrow than time. But her dress was something so surprisingly rich, that I cannot forbear describing it to you. She wore a vest called *donalmá*, which differs from a *caftán* by longer sleeves, and folding over at the bottom. It was of purple cloth, straight to her shape, and thick set, on each side, down to her feet and round the sleeves, with pearls of the best water, of the same size as their buttons commonly are. . . This habit was tied, at the waist, with two large tassels of smaller pearls, and round the arms embroidered with large diamonds. The shift was fastened at the bottom with a great diamond, shaped like a lozenge; her girdle as broad as the broadest English

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ribbon, entirely covered with diamonds. Round her neck she wore three chains which reached to her knees; one of large pearl, at the bottom of which hung a fine-coloured emerald, as big as a turkey-egg; another consisting of two hundred emeralds, closely joined together, of the most lively green, and perfectly matched, every one as large as a half-crown piece, and as thick as three crown pieces; and another of small emeralds, perfectly round. But her ear-rings eclipsed all the rest. They were two diamonds, shaped exactly like pears as large as a big hazel nut. Round her *Kalpác* she had four strings of pearl, the whitest and most perfect in the world, at least enough to make four necklaces, every one as large as the Duchess of Marlborough's, and of the same shape, fastened with two roses, consisting of a large ruby for the middle stone, and round them twenty drops of clean diamonds to each. . . ."

In another letter, our lively correspondent writes down and translates a Turkish love-letter, consisting of a pearl, a clove, a jonquil, paper, a pear, soap, a piece of coal, and other strangely assorted articles, the meaning of the whole being as follows :—

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Pearl.	Fairest of the young.
Clove.	You are as slender as the deer!
	You are an unblown rose!
	I have loved you, and you have not known it!
Jonquil.	Have pity on my passion!
Paper.	I faint every hour!
Pear.	Give me some hope.
Soap.	I am sick with love.
Coal.	May I die, and all my years be yours!
A rose.	May you be pleased, and your sorrows mine.
A straw.	Suffer me to be your slave.
Cloth.	Your price is not to be found.
Cinnamon.	But my fortune is yours.
A match.	I burn, I burn! my flame consumes me!
Gold thread.	Don't turn your face away from me.
Hair.	Crown of my head!
Grape.	My two eyes!
Gold wire.	I die—come quickly.

And, by way of postscript:

Pepper.	Send me an answer.

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Surely some confusion would ensue, if these symbols got jumbled together in transmission.

Mr. Leigh Hunt, commenting on the luxurious colouring of these Eastern Letters, observes, with some justice, that if the writer soon leaves the coldness or reserve of her country behind her, in her sympathy with languishing airs, illustrative dances, and other Oriental peculiarities, her communications only become so much the more original and true, and convert her into a kind of Sultana herself, ravishing the wits of Turkey, Mr. Pope, and posterity. No wonder her portrait was afterwards painted in the Eastern habit. The warmth of the climate seems to have passed into her blood. Her residence on the sunny shores of the Bosphorus, and under the bright blue sky of the East, developed the exuberant vitality and sensuousness of her nature; though it did not impair her clear judgment and strong, good sense.

But throughout these and all her future letters we notice two conspicuous points; one, that if she were deficient in sentiment, and somewhat too apt to put forward her aristocratic hauteur, her intelligence was remarkably sound and her discretion considerable, while her sympathies were always on the side of right and

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justice; second, that the affection for her husband, which she certainly felt during the earlier part of their married life, gradually faded, and that he ceased to occupy her thoughts except as "a gentleman for whom circumstances and a kindly habit maintained a reasonable consideration." The truth is, as she herself said before marriage, they were not suited to each other. She surpassed him in parts, in accomplishments, in social qualifications; and as she became more and more the centre of their circle, and the object of attraction, she learned to look with increasing indifference upon the grave and reticent father of her children. We should be inclined to pity Mr. Montagu very sincerely, were it not for the recollection that he wedded this brilliant beauty in defiance of her warnings as to their incompatibility of tastes and character.

Lady Mary's residence in the East resulted in a signal benefit to her country, the introduction of inoculation. In a letter written from Adrianople, she says:—

"The small-pox, so fatal and so general amongst us, is here entirely harmless, by the invention of ingrafting, which is the term they give it. There is a

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set of old women who make it their business to perform the operation every autumn, in the month of September, when the great heat is abated. People send to one another to know if any of their family has a mind to have the small pox; they make parties for this purpose, and, when they are met, the old woman comes with a nut-shell full of the matter of the best sort of small-pox, and asks what vein you please to have opened. She immediately rips open that you offer her with a large needle, and puts into the vein as much matter as can lie upon the head of her needle, and after that, binds up the little wound with a hollow shell, and in this manner opens four or five veins."

She had the courage and the true affection to try the experiment upon her son; and on her return to England, laboured hard to popularise the innovation among her countrywomen. A woman of fashion who could persevere in so generous an aim must have had noble qualities both of mind and heart, and is surely entitled to our lenient judgment when her animal spirits and disdain of conventionalities carried her beyond the ordinary limits of social punctilio. It was no easy task which she had imposed upon herself. She had to encounter the prejudices of the

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medical profession, and to conquer the ignorance and credulity of the public. The English people have always been the slaves of custom and tradition; and thousands were willing rather to die of a disease which had a respectable flavour of antiquity than to be saved by a process which was "new fangled" and came from "foreign parts." It was, as Lady Louisa Stuart emphatically remarks, an arduous and a thankless enterprise. "Those who have heard her applauded for it ever since they were born," she says, "and have also seen how joyfully vaccination was welcomed in their own days, may naturally conclude that when once the experiment was made, and had proved successful, she could have nothing to do but to sit down triumphant, and receive the thanks and blessings of her countrymen." Such was not the case; in the four or five years immediately succeeding her return to England, she seldom passed a day without almost regretting her heroic undertaking, such were the vexation, the obloquy, and the persecution it brought upon her. The clamour raised by folly and fanaticism was almost incredible. The faculty, always intensely conservative, rose in arms to a man, foretelling failure and the most disastrous consequences; the clergy descanted from

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their pulpits, on the impiety of seeking to control the designs of Providence, as if small-pox were a blessing sent direct from heaven; the common people were encouraged to hoot at her as an unnatural mother, who had endangered the lives of her own children. And though she gained many supporters among the higher and more enlightened classes, headed by the Princess of Wales, whose strong intellect appreciated the excellence of her object, some even of her acquaintances joined in the ignorant outcry. The four great physicians, appointed by Government to watch the progress of her daughter's inoculation, showed so much incredulity as to its success, and so much unwillingness that it should succeed, such an evident spirit of "rancour and malignity," that she was afraid to leave the child alone with them for a second, lest an interference with the mode of treatment should be attempted.

This terrible disease, against which she strove so chivalrously, would appear to have impressed her imagination strongly, as she makes its ravages the subject of one of her 'Town Eclogues,' published about 1716. A few lines may be quoted:—

"The wretched Flavia on her couch reclin'd,
Thus breath'd the anguish of a wounded mind,

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A glass revers'd in her right hand she bore,
For now she shunn'd the face she sought before.
"How am I changed! alas, how am I grown
A frightful spectre, to myself unknown!
Where's my complexion? where my radiant bloom,
That promised happiness for years to come?
Then with what pleasure I this face survey'd!
To look once more, my visits oft delay'd!
Charm'd with the view, a fresher red would rise,
And a new life shot sparkling from my eyes!
"Ah! faithless glass, my wonted bloom restore;
Alas! I rave, that bloom is now no more!
The greatest good the gods on men bestow,
Ev'n youth itself, to me is useless now . . .
As round the room I turn my weeping eyes,
New unaffected scenes of sorrow rise.
Far from my sight that killing picture bear,
The face disfigure, and the canvas tear:
That picture which with pride I us'd to show,
The lost resemblance but upbraids me now."

While abroad, Lady Mary and her husband visited several parts of Germany; and on their return, traversed the Archipelago, touched at the African coast, crossed the Mediterranean to Genoa, and thence proceeded homeward by way of Lyons and Paris. From all these places she wrote letters of the liveliest description, yet not less accurate than

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lively; which may still be read with interest and amusement, so idiomatic is their English, so admirable is their good sense, so fresh are they, and so "full of brain." There is scarcely any more excellent letter-writing in all our literature. We do not fear to compare them with those of Madame de Sévigné; if they are less polished, they are more natural. We shall venture on a few extracts, before we take up our narrative of Lady Mary's life in England.

A Scene in a Turkish Bagnio.

"I was three days ago at one of the finest in the town, and had the opportunity of seeing a Turkish bride received there, and all the ceremony used on that occasion, which made me recollect the epithalamium of Helen, by Theocritus; and it seems to me, that the same customs have continued ever since. All the she-friends, relatives, and acquaintances of the two families, newly allied, meet at the bagnio, several others go out of curiosity, and I believe that day there were two hundred women. Those that were or had been married, placed themselves round the rooms on the marble sofas; but the virgins very hastily threw off their clothes, and appeared

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without other ornament or covering than their own long hair braided with pearl or ribbon. Two of them met the bride at the door, conducted by her mother and another grave relation. She was a beautiful maid of about seventeen, very richly dressed, and shining with jewels, but was presently reduced to the state of nature. Two others filled silver gilt pots with perfume, and began the procession, the rest following in pairs, to the number of thirty. The leaders sung an epithalamium, answered by the others in chorus, and the two last led the fair bride, her eyes fixed on the ground, with a charming affectation of modesty. In this order they marched round the three largest rooms of the bagnio... After having made their tour, the bride was again led to every matron round the rooms, who saluted her with a compliment and a present, some of jewels, others of pieces of stuff, handkerchiefs, or little gallantries of that nature, which she thanked them for, by kissing their hands."

The Shores of the Hellespont.

"At five the next morning we anchored in the Hellespont, between the castles of Sestos and Abydos, now called the Dardanelles. These are now two little

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ancient castles, but of no strength, being surrounded by a rising ground behind them, which, I confess, I should never have taken notice of, if I had not heard it observed by our captain and officers, my imagination being wholly employed by the tragic story that you are well acquainted with :

> The swimming lover, and the nightly bride,
> How Hero lov'd, and how Leander died.

Verse again! . . . I am certainly infected by the poetical air I have passed through. That of Abydos is undoubtedly very amorous, since that soft passion betrayed the castle into the hands of the Turks, who besieged it in the reign of Orcharas. The governor's daughter imagining to have seen her future husband in a dream (though I don't find she had either slept upon bride-cake, or kept St. Agnes's fast *), fancied she saw the dear figure in the form of one of the besiegers ; and being willing to obey her destiny, tossed a note to him over the wall, with the offer

* It was a favourite superstition of yore, that maidens who went through certain ceremonies on St. Agnes' Eve would be favoured with a vision of their future husbands. Keats has made use of this superstition in his fine poem, 'The Eve of St. Agnes.'

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of her person, and the delivery of the castle. He showed it to his general, who consented to try the sincerity of her intentions, and withdrew his army, ordering the young man to return with a select body of men at midnight. She admitted him at the appointed hour; he destroyed the garrison, took the father prisoner, and made her his wife. This town is in Asia, first founded by the Milesians. Sestos is in Europe, and was once the principal city of Chersonesus. Since I have seen this strait, I find nothing improbable in the adventure of Leander, or very wonderful in the bridge of boats of Xerxes. 'Tis so narrow, 'tis not surprising a young lover should attempt to swim, or an ambitious king try to pass his army over it. But then 'tis so subject to storms, 'tis no wonder the lover perished, and the bridge was broken. From hence we had a full view of Mount Ida,

> 'Where Juno once caress'd her am'rous Jove,
> And the world's master lay subdu'd by love.'

Not many leagues' sail from hence, I saw the point of land where poor old Hecuba was buried; and about a league from that place is Cape Janizary, the famous promontory of Sigæum, where we anchored."

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At Genoa.

"You may see in this place the *glorious liberty* of a republic, or, more properly, an aristocracy, the common people here being as arrant slaves as the French; but the old nobles pay little respect to the Doge, who is but two years in his office, and whose wife, at that very time, assumes no rank above another noble lady. 'Tis true, the family of Andrea Doria (that great man, who restored them that liberty they enjoy) have some particular privileges; when the senate found it necessary to put a stop to the luxury of dress, forbidding the wearing of jewels and brocades, they left them at liberty to make what expense they pleased. I look with great pleasure on the statue of that hero, which is in the court belonging to the house of Duke Doria. This puts me in mind of their palaces, which I can never describe as I ought. Is it not enough that I say they are, most of them, the design of Palladio? The street called Strada Nova is perhaps the most beautiful line of building in the world. I must particularly mention the vast palaces of Durazzo; those of the two Balbi, joined together by a magnificent colonnade; that of the Imperiale at this village of St. Pierre d'Arena; and another of the Doria. The perfection

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of architecture, and the utmost profusion of rich furniture, are to be seen here, disposed with the most elegant taste and lavish magnificence. But I am charmed with nothing so much as the collection of pictures by the pencils of Raphael, Paolo Veronese, Titian, Caracci, Michael Angelo, Guido, and Correggio, which two I mention last as my particular favourites. I own I can find no pleasure in objects of horror; and, in my opinion, the more naturally a crucifix is represented, the more disagreeable it is. These, my beloved painters, show nature, and show it in the most charming light. I was particularly pleased with a Lucretia in the house of Balbi; the expressive beauty of that face and bosom gives all the passions of pity and admiration that could be raised in the soul by the finest poem on that subject. A Cleopatra of the same hand deserves to be mentioned; and I should say more of her, if Lucretia had not first engaged my eyes."

*Crossing the Channel.**

"I arrived this morning at Dover, after being tossed a whole night in the packet boat, in so violent

* Dated Dover, October 31st, (O.S.), 1718.

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a manner that the master, considering the weakness of his vessel, thought it proper to remove the mail, and give us notice of the danger. We called a little fishing-boat, which could hardly make up to us; while all the people on board us were crying to heaven. It is hard to imagine one's self in a scene of greater horror than on such an occasion; and yet, shall I own it to you? though I was not at all willing to be drowned, I could not forbear being entertained at the double distress of a fellow passenger. She was an English lady that I had met at Calais, who desired me to let her go over with me in my cabin. She had bought a fine point-head, which she was contriving to conceal from the Custom-house officer. When the wind grew high, and our little vessel cracked, she fell very heartily to her prayers, and thought wholly of her soul. When it seemed to abate, she returned to the worldly care of her head-dress, and addressed herself to me, 'Dear madam, will you take care of this point? if it should be lost!—Ah, Lord, we shall all be lost!—Lord have mercy on my soul!—Pray, madam, take care of this head-dress." This easy transition from her soul to her head-dress, and the alternate agonies that both gave her, made it hard to determine which she

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thought of greatest value. But, however, the scene was not so diverting but I was glad to get rid of it, and be thrown into the little boat, though with some hazard of breaking my neck. It brought me safe hither; and I cannot help looking with partial eyes on my native land. That partiality was certainly given us by nature, to prevent rambling, the effect of an ambitious thirst after knowledge, which we are not formed to enjoy. All we get by it is a fruitless desire of mixing the different pleasures and conveniences which are given to the different parts of the world, and cannot meet in any one of them. After having read all that is to be found in the languages I am mistress of, and having damaged my sight by midnight studies, I envy the easy peace of mind of a ruddy milk-maid, who, undisturbed by doubt, hears the sermons, with humility, every Sunday, not having confounded the sentiments of natural duty in her head by the vain enquiries of the schools, who may be more learned, yet, after all, must remain as ignorant."

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IV.

It was in October, 1718, that Lady Mary burst once more upon London Society. She was well-fitted to become one of its leaders and greatest ornaments. Still in the early maturity of womanhood (she was only 28), her personal charms were dazzling, and she could fascinate by her smile or by a glance from her fine eyes. Her accomplishments were many, her manners easy, graceful, and assured; her conversation always witty and agreeable, had gained additional attractions from the stores of anecdote and observation collected during foreign travel. It is no wonder that such a woman found a host of admirers; not much wonder, perhaps, that she was not averse to admiration. During her absence she had carried on a correspondence with the poet Pope, who hastened to welcome her return in language rhapsodical but sincere; employing, it must be owned, a

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frankness of speech which nowadays our Lady Marys, if we had any, would scarcely tolerate. "I prodigiously long," he writes, "for your sonnets, your remarks, your oriental learning;—but I long for nothing so much as your oriental self. You must of necessity be *advanced* so far *back* into true nature and simplicity of manners, by these three years' residence in the East, that I shall look upon you as so many years younger than you were, so much nearer innocence (that is, truth) and infancy (that is, openness). I expect to see your soul as much thinner dressed as your body; and that you have left off, as unwieldy and cumbersome, a great many European habits. Without offence to your modesty be it spoken, I have a burning desire to see your soul stark-naked, for I am confident 'tis the prettiest kind of white soul in the universe.—But I forget whom I am talking to; you may possibly by this time believe, according to the prophet, that you have none; if so, show me that which comes next to a soul; you may easily put it upon a poor ignorant Christian for a soul, and please him as well with it—I mean your heart;—Mahomet, I think, allows you hearts; which (together with fine eyes and other agreeable equivalents) are worth all the souls on this

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side the world. But if I must be content with seeing your body only, God send it to come quickly. I honour it more than the diamond-casket that held Homer's Iliads; for in the very twinkle of one eye of it there is more wit, and in the very dimple of one cheek of it there is more meaning, than all the souls that ever were casually put into women. . . . "

Mr. Pope goes on to tell the story of two rural lovers, John Hewet and Sarah Drew, who, a week before their intended marriage-day, were engaged in pastoral labours in a field at Stanton-Harcourt. A terrible storm arose, driving the workers to seek shelter under the trees and hedges. Sarah, frightened and breathless, sunk on a haycock, and John (who never separated from her) sate by her side, having raked two or three heaps together to secure her. "Immediately there was heard so loud a crack as if heaven had burst asunder. The labourers, all solicitous for each other's safety, called to one another: those that were nearest our lovers, hearing no answer, stept to the place where they lay: they first saw a little smoke, and after, this faithful pair:— John, with one arm about his Sarah's neck, and the other held over her face, as if to screen her from the lightning. They were struck dead, and already

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grown stiff and cold in this tender posture." * Pope goes on to relate that he had been asked for an epitaph to be engraved on their monument at Stanton Harcourt, and duly records it :—

"When Eastern lovers feed the fun'ral fire,
On the same pile their faithful fair expire :
Here pitying Heaven that virtue mutual found,
And blasted both, that it might neither wound.
Hearts so sincere th'Almighty saw well pleas'd,
Sent his own lightning, and the victims seiz'd.

1

Think not, by rig'rous judgment seiz'd,
A pair so faithful could expire ;
Victims so pure Heav'n saw well-pleas'd,
And snatch'd them in celestial fire.

2

Live well, and fear no sudden fate :
When God calls virtue to the grave,
Alike 'tis justice, soon or late,
Mercy alike to kill or save.
Virtue unmov'd can hear the call,
And face the flash that melts the ball."

Lady Mary replied to the letter, and criticized the

* This incident has been introduced by Thomson into his "Seasons."

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epitaph, on the 1st of November (*O.S.*); and it is difficult not to conjecture that she saw the bad taste and false sentiments, and was willing to indulge in a little gentle ridicule. She writes:—

"I must applaud your good nature in supposing that your pastoral lovers (vulgarly called haymakers) would have lived in everlasting jig and harmony, if the lightning had not interrupted their scheme of happiness. I see no reason to imagine that John Hughes and Sarah Drew were either wiser or more virtuous than their neighbours. That a 'well-set man' of twenty-five should have a fancy to marry a 'brown woman' of eighteen, is nothing marvellous; and I cannot help thinking, that had they married, their lives would have passed in the common track with their fellow-parishioners. His endeavouring to shield her from a storm, was a natural action, and what he would have certainly done for his horse, if he had been in the same situation. Neither am I of opinion, that their sudden death was a reward of their mutual virtue." She then submits the following epitaph, an audacious burlesque, as more just than, if not so poetical as, his own:—

"Here lie John Hughes and Sarah Drew;
Perhaps you'll say, what's that to you?

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Believe me, friend, much may be said
On this poor couple that are dead.
On Sunday next they should have married ;
But see how oddly things are carried !
On Thursday last it rain'd and lighten'd ;
These tender lovers, sadly frighten'd,
Shelter'd beneath the cocking hay,
In hopes to pass the time away ;
But the bold thunder found them out
(Commission'd for that end no doubt).
And, seizing on their trembling breath,
Consign'd them to the shades of death.
Who knows if 'twas not kindly done ?
For had they seen the next year's sun,
A beaten wife and cuckold swain
Had jointly curs'd the marriage chain :
Now they are happy in their doom,
For Pope has wrote upon their tomb."

"I confess," adds the wit and beauty,—had she not been the latter, the former would scarcely have secured the poet's pardon !—"these sentiments are not altogether so heroic as yours ; but I hope you will forgive them in favour of the last two lines."

Soon after her return Lady Mary went to live at Twickenham, near Pope's Villa, where she gathered around her a coterie of notabilities. Amongst them

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was the brilliant Lord Hervey, whose rare intellectual powers have been forgotten by posterity in the obloquy flung upon his memory by the satire of Pope. So clever a man was necessarily attracted by so clever a woman; and they became fast friends. Their intimacy, however, did not prevent the keen-tongued beauty from laughing at his occasional affectations; and there was truth as well as epigram in her remark that this world consisted of "men, women, and Herveys." Lord Hervey dying in the prime of manhood after Lady Mary had settled abroad, his eldest son sealed up her letters, and returned them to her with an assurance that none of them had been read or opened. In reply she thanked him for his honourable conduct, adding, that she could almost regret he had not glanced his eye over a correspondence which would have shown him what so young a man, perhaps, might be inclined to doubt, the possibility of a long and steadfast friendship being maintained, without the least admixture of love, between two person of different sexes. It has been suggested that this disavowal is not worthy of acceptance. We know not why. The scandal connected with Lady Mary in this case as in other cases depends wholly on the assertions of men who were notoriously her enemies, such

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as Horace Walpole, who delighted in stealthily killing reputations, and Pope, whose extravagant love was changed by her repulse of him to bitterest hate. That she wrote freely in her letters, and that she allowed others to write freely to her, will not be regarded as a proof of criminal conduct by any person who considers the peculiarities of her character, or is familiar with the licence of language that in her time prevailed among the most virtuous. But even this very freedom is the freedom of a bold and unconventional nature, rather than that of a vicious disposition. She was conscious of her powers of sarcasm, and she used them profusely; sparing neither friend nor foe; laughing at anything and everybody; more out of excessive spirits, we think, and of delight in her own witty utterances, than from any actual malice. One who wrote and spoke so liberally and yet so keenly could not fail to provoke enmities, which caused her much annoyance in her life-time, and have pursued her to this day with their evil shadow. We do not defend either her occasional coarseness, her want of seriousness when seriousness would be proper, or her incessant raillery; but we see no reason to conclude her guilty of any graver errors. The only evidence against her is that of witnesses who have no claim to be believed. It is

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possible that she might have sinned had she had more heart; for her position as a beauty and a wit, with a grave husband, her inferior in all respects, and a crowd of admirers, who made a jest of morality and religion, was very dangerous. But it seems to us that she never cared enough about anybody to play the disgraceful part played by so many ladies of rank in the reign of the First George.

Lady Louisa Stuart records some instances of her great grandmother's indiscretion of speech, which help to explain the ill-feeling she aroused. Thus, her former friend and correspondent, Lady Rich, who became "that melancholy thing, a decayed beauty," and endeavoured to disguise the ravages of the years by an affectation of girlish simplicity, frequently served as a target for Lady Mary's arrows. On one occasion, the Master of the Rolls (old Sir Joseph Jekyll) happening to be mentioned, "Pray, who is he?" inquired Lady Rich, in an innocent tone. "Sir Humphrey Monneux, madam," replied Lady Mary, naming off-hand the most improbable person that occurred to her. The company laughed, and Lady Rich looked disconcerted; but, not venturing to betray that her ignorance had been only assumed, she desperately plunged into still greater ineptitude. "Well! I am

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vastly ashamed of being so prodigiously ignorant. I dare say I ask a mighty silly question ; but, pray now, what is it to be Master of the Rolls? What does he do? for I really don't know." "Why, madam, he superintends all the French rolls that are baked in London; and without him you would have no bread and butter for your breakfast." To this no answer could be made. Lady Rich coloured, flirted her fan, and professed herself no fit competitor for Lady Mary; *she* had no wit, not she. "Nay; but look you, dear madam, I grant it a very fine thing to continue always fifteen,—*that* everybody must approve of; it is quite fair: but indeed, indeed, one need not be five years old."

There was a Mrs. Murray, daughter of Baillie of Jerviswood, and a relation of Bishop Burnet, who, being very comely and very agreeable, made some figure in society. It chanced most unfortunately, that one of her father's footmen conceived a desperate passion for her, and in a fit of madness or drunkenness, one night entered her chamber, armed with a pistol. Her cries brought assistance; he was seized, tried, and transported; Mrs. Murray, of course, being called as a witness against him at the Old Bailey. The incident, every way painful to the feelings of a gentlewoman, was made the subject of a very scurrilous

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ballad, the composition of which Mrs. Murray erroneously ascribed to Lady Mary. Though innocent of that offence, her love of mischief and her facile pen tempted her to indite an "Epistle from Arthur Grey in Newgate." It is complimentary to the lady's charms, and free from all insinuations; but we need not wonder that she objected to the poetical celebration of an event which she might naturally desire to be forgotten.

More important to Lady Mary's fame was her quarrel with Lady Walpole, the first wife of Sir Robert, and the mother of Horace Walpole, though in this case her conduct was liable to no imputation. The story is too long to tell here, and would have no interest for modern readers; and we allude to it only because it fully accounts for Horace Walpole's malignant attacks upon Lady Mary.

We come now to her quarrel with Pope, which is little to the credit of either. As Lady Louisa Stuart says, had it made less noise and been less canvassed, it would be desirable to pass it by unnoticed; for when two persons of distinguished ability misemploy their talents and degrade themselves by striving to vilify each other, the honest part of their admirers must feel more inclination to avert their eyes from the

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conflict than to engage in it as partisans on the one side or the other. We are disposed to believe that Pope's passion for Lady Mary was sincere; that he was really dazzled by her personal and intellectual accomplishments into as strong and deep an affection as it was possible for him to feel. This, too, is Leigh Hunt's opinion; but it is one which in itself is a severe condemnation upon the poet, who could not forget that Lady Mary was a wife and a mother, nor is she wholly free from blame. Our belief is that she laughed at his impassioned letters, but it might have been better had she never received them. That she returned his attachment, there is not the slightest proof; though it is conceivable that her vanity was flattered by dragging the greatest wit and poet of the day in her train. The causes of the rupture which eventually occurred were probably various. We suspect that the poet found she was amusing herself with the extravagance of his devotion; but Lady Mary's own statement is: that at some ill-chosen time, when she least expected what romances call *a declaration*, he made such passionate love to her as, in spite of her utmost endeavours to be angry and look grave, provoked an immoderate fit of laughter; from which moment he became her implacable enemy.

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Leigh Hunt exclaims: — "A pause comes upon the spirit and the tongue at hearing such an explanation as this;—a pause in which no one of any imagination can help having a deep sense of the blackness of the mortification with which the poor, misshaped, applauded poet, must have felt his lustre smitten, and his future recollections degraded. To say that he had any right to make love to her is one thing; yet to believe that her manners, and cast of character, as well as the nature of the times, and of the circles in which she moved, had given no license, no encouragement, no pardoning hope to the presumption, is impossible; and to trample in this way upon the whole miserable body of his vanity and humility, upon all which the consciousness of acceptability and glory among his fellow-creatures, had given him to sustain himself, and all which in so poor, and fragile, and dwarfed, and degrading a shape, required so much to be so sustained;—assuredly it was inexcusable,—it was inhuman." All this sentimental rhetoric seems to us entirely beside the mark. How was Lady Mary to have dealt with a declaration of love made under such circumstances? Had she treated it seriously, and appealed to her husband, the physical weakness of Pope would have shielded him from chastisement. "A

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little pity," says Leigh Hunt, "might have softened her contempt." Pity! pity for so gross and uncalled-for an insult! There is not the least justification for hinting that she had encouraged the poet. Her letters prove exactly the contrary. And though our critics of to-day, looking back upon the whole history, are convinced of the reality of the poet's attachment, it is quite possible that Lady Mary, accustomed to the protestations of flatterers, and knowing Pope's prodigality of compliment to his friends, never regarded it as serious. In such a case, a sudden avowal of love might well appeal to her keen sense of the ridiculous.

What followed showed, however, that it is unwise to give umbrage to a great satirist. Pope's revenge was immediate and terrible, but it was also unmanly. In the days of his infatuation he had celebrated the unfortunate beauty under the name of Sappho in language of the warmest eulogy; he now brought all the resources of his wit to bear upon her degradation. The first attack was made in the third Epistle of the 'Moral Essays,' and, to speak truth, was more vulgar than witty:—

> "Rufa, whose eye, quick-glancing o'er the park,
> Attracts each light gay meteor of a spark,

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Agrees as ill with Rufa studying Locke,
As Sappho's diamonds with her dirty smock;
Or Sappho at her toilet's greasy task,
With Sappho fragrant at an evening masque:
So morning insects that in muck begun,
Shine, buzz, and fly-blow in the setting sun."

Even this grossness did not equal the grossness of a couplet which he introduced into his 'Imitations of Horace.' We cannot quote it, and Pope himself was afterwards sufficiently ashamed of it to deny that it applied to her.

About the same time the satirist assailed one of Lady Mary's friends, the Lord Hervey to whom we have alluded, in verses of exquisite polish and bitter satire, though failing in that truth which lends satire its sharpest point. Lord Hervey retorted in a poem entitled 'Verses, addressed to the Imitator of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace.' This is included in Lady Mary's works, though in one of her letters, she says: "I can assure him (Pope) they were wrote, without my knowledge, by a gentleman of very great merit whom I very much esteem; who, he will never guess, and who if he did know he durst not attack." We are inclined to accept Lady Mary's statement. The 'Verses' have none of her liveliness,

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and are much more like Lord Hervey's general style. We subjoin a specimen :—

In two large columns on thy motley page,
Where Roman wit is strip'd with English rage ;
Where ribaldry to satire makes pretence,
And modern scandal rolls with ancient sense :
Whilst on one side we see how Horace thought,
And on the other how he never wrote ;
Who can believe, who view the bad, the good,
That the dull copyist better understood
That spirit he pretends to imitate,
Than heretofore that Greek he did translate ?
Thine is just such an image of *his* pen,
As thou thyself art of the sons of men,
Where our own species in burlesque we trace,
A sign-post likeness of the human race,
That is at once resemblance and disgrace . . .
When God created thee, one would believe
He said the same as to the snake of Eve ;
To human race antipathy declare,
'Twixt them and thee be everlasting war.
But oh ! the sequel of the sentence dread,
And whilst you *bruise their heel*, beware your head.
Nor think thy weakness shall be thy defence,
The female scold's protection in offence.
Sure 'tis as fair to beat who cannot fight,
As 'tis to libel those who cannot write.

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And if thou draw'st thy pen to aid the law,
Others a cudgel, or a rod, may draw.
If none with vengeance yet thy crimes pursue,
Or give thy manifold affronts their due;
If limbs unbroken, skin without a stain,
Unwhipt, unblanketed, unkick'd, unslain,
That wretched little carcase you retain,
The reason is, not that the world wants eyes,
But thou'rt so mean, they see, and they despise:
When fretful porcupine, with ranc'rous will,
From mounted back shoots forth a harmless quill,
Cool the spectators stand; and all the while
Upon the angry little monster smile.
Thus 'tis with thee:—while impotently safe,
You strike unwounding, we unhurt can laugh.
Who but must laugh, this bully when he sees,
A puny insect shiv'ring at a breeze?"

This was attacking with a bludgeon; Pope replied with a rapier thrust that went home to the quick. The 'Epistle to Arbuthnot' is, unquestionably, one of the most finished satires in any language. It is impossible not to own its force and lurid splendour, while we condemn its almost diabolic wickedness. Lord Hervey is characterised as

". . . . that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk,"

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and his character and parts are mercilessly dissected in a series of brilliant couplets that will live as long as English literature endures. Lady Mary, however, is not included in the attack; which induces us to believe that Pope himself was convinced she had no share in the 'Verses,' or else he thought it safer to assail her in his letters and conversation, as he continued to do, with shameless effrontery, until she left England in 1739.

Her quarrel with Pope, however, did not affect the estimation in which she was held by Society. She continued a Woman of Fashion, and included among her friends the famous Earl of Mansfield (Gay's "sweet-tongued Murray"), the not less famous Duchess Sarah of Marlborough, Fielding the novelist, Congreve the dramatist, Lord and Lady Hervey, Gay and Garth, and many others whose names we still read with respect, curiosity, or admiration. Of her manner of life we gain some glimpses from her letters.

She writes to her sister in 1722:—

"One of my letters I know you received long since, for Charles Churchill [the author of 'The Rosciad'] told me so at the Opera. At this instant I am at Twickenham; Mr. Wortley has purchased the small

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habitation where you saw me. We propose to make some small alterations. That and the education of my daughter are my chief amusements. I hope yours is well, *et ne fait que croître et embellir.*

"I live in a sort of solitude, which wants very little of being such as I would have it. Lady Jane Wharton is to be married to Mr. Holt, which I am sorry for;—to see a young woman that I really think one of the agreeablest girls upon earth so vilely misplaced—but where are people matched?—I suppose we shall all come right in Heaven; as in a country dance, the hands are strangely given and taken, while they are in motion, at last all meet their partners when the jig is done."

Was Lady Mary thinking of herself when she penned this sentence?

In 1723, she writes:—

"Your old friend Mrs. Lowther is still fair and young, and in pale pink every night in the parks; but, after being highly in favour, poor I am in utter disgrace, without my being able to guess wherefore, except she fancied me the author or abettor of two vile ballads written on her dying adventure,* which

* An absurd mistake into which she had been led by a tradesman sending in a message as from one who "died (dyed) for her ladyship."

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I am so innocent of that I never saw it [them]. . . . Lady B. Manners is on the brink of matrimony with a Yorkshire Mr. Monkton of £3000 per annum: it is a match of the young Duchess's making, and she thinks matter of great triumph over the two coquet beauties, who can get nobody to have and to hold; they are decayed to a piteous degree, and so neglected that they are grown constant and particular to the two ugliest fellows in London. . . . This is, I think, the whole state of love; as to that of wit, it splits itself into ten thousand branches; parts increase and multiply to that stupendous degree, you see them at every turn, even in embroidered coats and pink-coloured top-knots; making verses is become almost as common as taking snuff, and God can tell what miserable stuff people carry about in their pockets, and offer to all their acquaintances, and you know one cannot refuse reading and taking a pinch. This is a very great grievance, and so particularly shocking to me, that I think our wise lawgivers should take it into consideration, and appoint a fast-day to beseech Heaven to put a stop to this epidemical disease, as they did last year for the plague with great success."

"Assemblies rage in this part of the world; there

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is not a street in town free from them, and some spirited ladies go to seven in a night. You need not question but love and play flourish under these encouragements. I now and then peep upon these things with the same coolness I would do on a moving picture; I laugh at some of the motions, wonder at others, now and then retire to the elected few, that have ears and hear, but mouths have they and speak not."

In 1724, Lady Mary writes:—

"This town improves in gaiety every day; the young people are younger than they used to be, and all the old are grown young. Nothing is talked of but entertainments of gallantry by land and water, and we insensibly begin to taste all the joys of arbitrary power. Politics are no more; nobody pretends to wince or kick under their burdens, but we go on cheerfully with our bells at our ears, ornamented with ribands, and highly contented with our present condition; so much for the general state of the nation. The last pleasure that fell in my way was Madame Sévigné's Letters; very pretty they are, but I assert, without the least vanity, that mine will be full as entertaining forty years hence. I advise you therefore to put none of them to the use of waste paper."

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In 1725 (ætat. 35):—

"I pass many hours on horseback, and, I'll assure you, ride stag-hunting, which I know you'll stare to hear of. I have arrived to vast courage and skill that way, and am as well pleased with it as with the acquisition of a new sense: his Royal Highness hunts in Richmond Park, and I make one of the *beau monde* in his train. I desire you after this account not to name the word old woman to me any more. I approach to fifteen nearer than I did ten years ago, and am in hopes to improve every year in health and vivacity. . . .

"I am now at the same distance from London that you are from Paris, and could pall with solitary amusements with a good deal of taste; but I resist it, as a temptation of Satan, and rather turn my endeavours to make the world as agreeable to me as I can, which is the true philosophy; that of despising it is of no use but to hasten wrinkles. I ride a good deal, and have got a horse superior to any two-legged animal, he being without a fault. I work like an angel. I receive visits upon idle days, and I shade my life as I do my tent-stitch, that is, make as easy transitions as I can from business to pleasure; the one would be too flaring and gaudy

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without some dark shades of t'other; and if I worked altogether in the grave colours, you know 'twould be quite dismal.

"In the meantime I divert myself passably enough, and take care to improve as much as possible that stock of vanity and credulity that Heaven in its mercy has furnished me with; being sensible that to those two qualities, simple as they appear, all the pleasures of life are owing. I see everybody, but converse with nobody but *des amies choisies;* in the first rank of these are Lady Stafford and dear Molly Skirret [afterwards Lady Walpole], both of which have now the additional merit of being old acquaintances, and never having given me any reason to complain of either of 'em. I pass some days with the Duchess of Montague, who might be a reigning beauty if she pleased. I see the whole town every Sunday, and select a few that I retain to supper; in short, if life could be always what it is, I have so much humility in my temper that I could be contented without anything better, this two or three hundred years; but alas!

'Dulness, and wrinkles, and disease must come,
And age and death's irrevocable doom.'

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"I never was better in my life, nor ever past my hours more agreeably; I ride between London and Twickenham perpetually, and have little societies quite to my taste, and that is saying everything. I leave the great world to girls that know no better, and do not think one bit the worse of myself for having outlived a certain giddiness, which is sometimes excusable but never pleasing. Depend upon it, 'tis only the spleen that gives you these ideas; you may have many delightful days to come, and there is nothing more silly than to be too wise to be happy:

'If to be sad is to be wise,
I do most heartily despise
Whatever Socrates has said,
Or Tully writ, or Montaigne read.'

"This is a vile world, and I can easily comprehend, that whether one is at Paris or London, one is stifled with a certain mixture of fool and knave, that most people are composed of. I would have patience with a parcel of polite rogues or your downright honest fools; but Father Adam shines through his whole progeny. So much for our inside—then our outward is so liable to ugliness and distempers, that we are perpetually plagued with feeling our own decays and

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seeing those of other people. Yet sixpenny-worth of common sense divided among a whole nation, would make our lives roll away glibly enough; but then we make laws and we follow customs.

"There is a book come out [Gulliver's Travels] that all our people of taste run mad about; 'tis no less than the united work of a dignified clergyman [Swift], an eminent physician [Arbuthnot], and the first poet of the age [Pope],* and very wonderful it is, God knows!—great eloquence have they employed to prove themselves beasts, and show such a veneration for horses, that since the Essex Quaker, nobody has appeared so passionately devoted to that species; and, to say truth, they talk of a stable with so much warmth and affection, I cannot help suspecting some very powerful motive at the bottom of it.

"I am very glad you have the second part of the New Atalantis [a book of scandal, written by Mrs. Manley, which provoked the curiosity of the 'town' for a few months by its audacious stories]; if you have read it, will you be so good as to send it me? and in return I promise to get you the key to it. I know I can. But do you know what has happened to the

* It is needless to say that Pope and Arbuthnot had no share in it.

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unfortunate authoress? People are offended at the liberty she uses in her memoirs, and she is taken into custody. Miserable is the fate of writers: if they are agreeable, they are offensive; and if dull, they starve. I lament the loss of the other parts which they should have had; and have five hundred arguments at my fingers' ends to prove the ridiculousness of those creatures that think it worth while to take notice of what is only designed for diversion. After this, who will dare to give the history of Angelia? I was in hopes her fourth essay would have provoked some better pen to give more elegant and secret memoirs; but now she will serve as a scarecrow to frighten people from attempting anything but heavy panegyric; and we shall be teased with nothing but heroic poems, with names at length, and false characters, so daubed with flattery that they are the severest kind of lampoons, for they both scandalize the writer and the subject, like that vile paper, the Tatler."—(*Letter to Mrs. Hewet, Nov. 12th*, 1720).

"Most of the neighbours hereabouts have been to see me, but they are very few, and few of those few that are supportable—none agreeable. This part of the world is so different from Nottinghamshire, that I can hardly persuade myself it is in the same king-

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dom. The men here are all Sylvios, no Myrtilios. If they could express themselves so well, they would say, like him,

> "Mille ninfe darei per una fera
> Che da Melampo mio cacciata fosse;
> Godasi queste gioje
> Chi n' ha di me più gusto; io non le sento."

Though they cannot say it in Italian verse, they often speak to that purpose in English prose over a bottle, insensible of other pleasures than hunting and drinking. The consequence of which is, the poor female part of their family being seldom permitted a coach, or at best but a couple of starved jades to drag a dirty chariot, their lords and masters having no occasion for such a machine, as their mornings are spent among hounds, and the nights with as beastly companions, with what liquor they can get in this country, which is not very famous for good drink."

It must be confessed that the picture which Lady Mary paints of English Society in the first six or seven lustrums of the eighteenth century is not very attractive. Unfortunately, we know from contemporary witnesses that the colouring is not too dark,

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and that the outlines are not too hard. We doubt whether even in the reign of the second Charles, the corruption of society was so general or so excessive. It was then chiefly confined to the Court, and the classes open to Court influences; but under the two Georges it spread in every direction, and descended even to the lowest social strata. Men and women lived in an atmosphere of indecency and immorality; and fine ladies wrote and conversed on topics that a pure mind can scarcely glance at without disgust. Hogarth's canvas shows that the disease was not confined only to the higher orders; it infested the families of the country squire and the London citizen; and it extended its pestilential effect to the populace of our towns and villages. The Church seems to have made no effort to accomplish a reform; its bishops were political time-servers, its clergy were ignorant and coarse, who passed the bottle as freely as any of their parishioners. It is noticeable that in Lady Mary's letters, the allusions to the Church and its ministers are always unflattering and depreciatory. In truth, Society seems to have given itself up to a scarcely veiled infidelity. In the political world men were actuated by the most sordid jealousies and the meanest motives, the love of place or the hope of a pension.

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The votes of members of the House of Common were openly bought and sold; and in every department of the administration laxity and corruption prevailed. Only in literature was there any sign of vigour, any indication of returning health; and it may be confessed that matters were not utterly desperate when the world listened without indignation to the scathing satire of Pope and the delicate but not less effective ridicule of Addison. Yet literature had its reeking kennels and its filthy purlieus, where reputations were stealthily blasted, and immorality was unblushingly displayed. The age which produced the Spectator produced also the Turkish Spy; and the ballad-mongers of Grub Street were not less popular than the author of the 'Essay on Man.' In a fragment called the 'The Court of Dulness,' Lady Mary draws no exaggerated picture when she represents Obscurity as presiding over the realm of letters.—"To thee," she says,

> "To thee for shelter all the dull still fly,
> Pert double meanings e'en at school we try.
> What numerous writers owe their praise to thee,
> No sex—no age—is from thy influence free;
> By thee how bright appears the senseless song,
> By thee the book is sold, the lines are strong.

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The heaviest poet, by thy powerful aid,
Warms the brisk youth and charms the sprightly maid;
Where breathes the mortal who's not prov'd thy force
In well-bred pun or waiting-room discourse?"

And afterwards she puts into the mouth of Obscurity the following strictures, which have the quality of truthfulness if they are deficient in poetical *verve*:—

"My humble subjects are not so plac'd so high,
They joke in kitchens and in cellars ply;
Yet one I have, bred in those worthy schools,
Admired by shoals of male and female fools;
In ballads what I dictate he shall sing,
And troops of converts to my banners bring.
Bold in my cause and most profanely dull,
With smooth unmeaning rhymes the town shall lull;
Shall sing of worms in great Arbuthnot's strain,
In lewd burlesque the sacred Psalms profane;
To maids of honour songs obscene address,
Nor need we doubt his wonderful success."

Lady Mary's own compositions are not free from the taint she so strongly condemns in others. There are passages which it is difficult to understand how she could write without a blush; it is still more difficult to understand how she could publish them. They are decent enough, however, compared with much

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that is found in Pope and Prior, not to say Swift, and leaving out of account the mob of versifiers who secured a sale for their productions only by steeping them in filth. The men of the Elizabethan era frequently stooped their genius to foul themes; the writers of the Restoration revelled in indecency. But the former wrote out of exuberant animal spirits, and the latter could at least be witty, while as for the penmen of the Georgian period, they were neither merry nor witty; they wrote lewdly and lived lewdly; and their writing was as poor, as mean, and as despicable as were their lives.

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V.

In 1739 Lady Mary left England, resolving to spend the remainder of her life on the Continent; and in Italy or its neighbourhood she resided until within a year of her death. This separation from her husband, and self-banishment from the fashionable circles where she had reigned supreme, has not unnaturally exercised the minds of her biographers. Mr. Dallaway attributes it to "declining health." Her granddaughter, Lady Louisa Stuart, admits that it cannot be satisfactorily explained, for want of any positive evidence or assurance on the subject. She adds that it is very possible, however, that the solution of this profound mystery, like that of some riddles which put the ingenuity of guessers to the farthest stretch, would prove so simple as to leave curiosity blunt and baffled. Mr. Leigh Hunt who deals with Lady Mary in a spirit of unwonted censoriousness, and relies much too strongly on the infamous gossip of Horace

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Walpole, seems to think it arose from her husband's disgust at her immoralities. "In certain matters," he says, "her independence of conduct was such as to render it impossible for her husband either to live with, or to separate from her, without danger of public scandal." And he continues: "therefore, as he foresaw its continuation, he very sensibly, and like a man philosophical from temperament and self-regard, proposed, or agreed to a proposal, that they should live apart, without noise,—without any show of hostility,—without manifestations of any sort calculated to subject either of them to more talk than could be helped." Now there is absolutely no foundation, apart from Walpole's assertions—the unsupported assertions of an unscrupulous enemy—for this assumption; and it is surely unreasonable to suppose that after condoning Lady Mary's "independence of conduct" for twenty years, Mr. Wortley would take affront at it when his wife was fifty years old. If so, his philosophy from "temperament and self-regard" must have been very accommodating; and having been so accommodating for nearly a quarter of a century, it might well have been protracted to the end. Lady Mary, no doubt, permitted herself a licence of language, which is justly offensive to the

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criticism of the present day; but such a licence was common enough among her contemporaries, and ladies of unimpeachable virtue talked and wrote in a style that overleaped all the bounds of decorum. And further, it is to be observed that Mr. Montagu continued to correspond with his wife down to the day of his death on terms of respect and confidence, which either prove that he had no suspicion of her conjugal infidelity, or that his philosophical temperament and self-regard were carried to an excess which rendered him indifferent to his own honour. It is not enough to say, as Leigh Hunt says, that "all this goes for nothing;" if so, what is the use of any kind of evidence? *

* "Rumours are poor things to hold up before us at a distance of a hundred and thirty years; and even Horace Walpole, even Pope, have nothing but vague irritation to vent against Lady Mary. And Mr. Wortley's letters, after his wife's departure, give us for the first time a certain friendliness for the heavy man, who is glad of her comfort in his composed way, and trusts her in their common concerns, and cares for her health and well-being. The two would seem after their stormy beginning to have grown into a certain friendship with the years. Perhaps he meant to join her, as several of his letters imply; or perhaps he permitted her to believe that he meant to join her; or perhaps it was held

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For ourselves, we believe that Lady Mary left England, first, because she had grown weary of it; second, because her free exercise of her satirical powers had raised around her a crowd of enemies; and, third, because advancing years brought out more strongly the incompatibility of temper which had always existed between her husband and herself. For the rest, we may reproduce, with some slight abridgment, Lady Louisa's explanations, which seem to do justice both to her grandmother and Mr. Wortley.

Lady Mary, she says, writing from Venice, in the first year of her absence, tells Lady Pomfret that she had long been persuading Mr. Wortley to go abroad, and at last, tired of delay, had set out alone, he promising to follow her; which, as yet, parliamentary attendance and other business had prevented his doing; but till she knew whether to expect him or not, she could not proceed to meet her (Lady Pomfret) at Rome. If this was the real truth, and there seems no reason to doubt it, we may easily conceive further delays to have taken place, and their reunion to

vaguely possible, as a thing that might or might not be, indifferent to the world, not over interesting even to themselves."—Mrs. Oliphant, 'Historical Sketches of the Reign of George II.,' i. 246.

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have been so deferred from time to time, that, insensibly, living asunder became the natural order of things, in which both acquiesced without any great reluctance. But if, on the contrary, it was only the colour they chose to give the affair; if the husband and wife—she in her fiftieth year, he several years older—had determined upon a separation, nothing can be more likely than that they settled it quietly and deliberately between themselves, neither proclaiming it to the world, nor connecting any third person; since their daughter [Lady Bute] was married, their son disjoined and alienated from them, and there existed nobody who had a right to call them to an account, or inquire into what was solely their own business. It admits of little doubt that their dispositions were unsuitable, and Mr. Wortley had sensibly felt it even while a lover.

That Lady Mary's wishes had always pointed to a residence abroad is clearly seen in a letter she wrote to Mr. Wortley before their marriage, when they were discussing the choice of a locality suitable to their (then) narrow incomes. How infinitely better it would be, she urged, to fix their abode in Italy, amidst every source of enjoyment, every object that could interest the mind and charm the fancy, than

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to languish in an obscure rural retirement at home? Their circumstances afterwards improved, it is true; but Lady Mary's partiality for the bright Italian skies and smiling landscapes was not likely to be affected by pecuniary considerations.

"These arguments, it is allowed," says Lady Louisa Stuart, "rest upon surmise and conjecture; but there is proof that Lady Mary's departure from England was not by any means hasty or sudden; for in a letter to Lady Pomfret, dated the 2nd of May, 1739, she announces her design of going abroad that summer; and she did not begin her journey till the end of July—three months afterwards. Other letters are extant, affording equal proof that Mr. Wortley and she parted upon the most friendly terms, and indeed, as no couple could have done who had had any recent quarrel or cause of quarrel. She wrote to him from Dartford, her first stage; again a few lines from Dover; and again the moment she arrived at Calais. Could this have passed, or would the petty details about servants, carriages, prices, etc., have been entered into between persons in a status of mutual displeasure? Not to mention that his preserving, docketing, and endorsing with his own hand even these slight notes, as well as all her

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subsequent letters, shows that he received nothing which came from her with indifference. His confidence in her was also very strongly testified by a transaction that took place when she had been abroad about two years. Believing that her influence and persuasions might still have some effect upon their unfortunate son, he entreated her to appoint a meeting with him, form a judgment of his present disposition, and decide what course it would be best to take, either in furthering or opposing his future projects. On the head of money, too, she was to determine with how much he should be supplied, and very particularly enjoined to make him suppose it came, not from his father, but herself. These were full powers to delegate—such as every woman would not be trusted with in the families where conjugal union is supposed to reign most uninterruptedly." Certainly, they were extraordinary powers if Mr. Wortley occupied towards his wife such a position as Leigh Hunt is disposed to indicate.

Lady Mary resided abroad for two-and-twenty years. The letters which during this period she addressed to her husband, her daughter, and her friends, are full of touches of quiet observation and passages

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of lively description. In December, 1740, writing to her husband, she records the recent exhumation of Herculaneum :—

"The town lately discovered is at Portici, about three miles from this place [Naples]. Since the first discovery, no care has been taken, and the ground fallen in, so that the present passage to it is, as I am told by everybody, extremely dangerous, and for some time, nobody ventures into it. . . . I have taken all possible pains to get information of this subterranean building, and am told 'tis the remains of the ancient city of Hercolana, and by what I can collect, there was a theatre entire, with all the scenes and ancient decorations; they have broken it to pieces by digging irregularly."

From Genoa, in August, 1741, she writes :—

"The manners of Italy are so much changed since we were here last, the alteration is scarcely credible. They say it has been by the last war. The French, being masters, introduced all their customs, which were eagerly embraced by the ladies, and I believe will never be laid aside; yet the different governments make different manners in every State. You know, though the Republic is not rich, there are many private families vastly so, and live at a great

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superfluous expense; all the people of first quality keep coaches as fine as the Speaker's, and some of them two or three, though the streets are too narrow to use them in the town; but they take the air in them, and their chairs carry them to the gates. The liveries are all plain; gold or silver being forbidden to be worn within the walls, the habits are all obliged to be black, but they wear exceedingly fine lace and linen; and in their country-houses, which are generally in the faubourg, they dress very richly, and have extremely fine jewels."

All her old vivacity is apparent in her various epistles to various correspondents. Take as an example her letter to her daughter, written from Brescia, in January, 1748:—

"I have never in all my travels seen but two sorts of people, and those very like one another; I mean men and women, who always have been, and ever will be, the same. The same vices and the same follies have been the fruit of all ages, though sometimes under different names. I remember when I returned from Turkey moving with the same affectation of youth among yours, and I do not doubt but your daughter will find the same, twenty years hence, among hers. One of the greatest happinesses of

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youth is the ignorance of evil, though it is often the ground of great indiscretions, and sometimes the active part of life is over, before an honest mind finds out how one ought to act in such a world as this. I am as much removed from it as it is possible to be on this side the grave; which is from my own inclination, for I might have even here a great deal of company; the way of living in this province being, I believe, what it is in the sociable part of Scotland, and was in England a hundred years ago. I had a visit in the holidays of thirty horse of ladies and gentlemen, with their servants (by the way, the ladies all ride like the late Duchess of Cleveland).* They came with the kind intent of staying with me at least a fortnight, though I had never seen any of them before; but they were all neighbours within ten miles round. I could not avoid entertaining them at supper, and by good luck had a large quantity of game in the house, which, with the help of my poultry, furnished out a plentiful table. I sent for the fiddles, and they were so obliging as to dance all night, and even dine with me the next day, though none of them had been in bed; and were

* That is, in masculine fashion.

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much disappointed I did not ask them to stay, it being the fashion to go in troops to one another's house, hunting and dancing together a month in each castle. I have not yet returned any of their visits, and I do not intend it for some time, to avoid this expensive hospitality. The trouble of it is not very great, they not expecting any ceremony. I left the room about one o'clock, and they continued their ball in the saloon above stairs, without being at all offended at my departure. But the greatest diversion I had was to see a lady of my own age comfortably dancing with her own husband, some years older; and I can assert that she jumped and galloped with the best of them."

Her sound sense is apparent in the following extract from a letter to Mr. Wortley (July 17, 1748):—

"I thank you for the copies of Sir Charles Hanbury's poetry, which extremely entertained me. I find tar-water has succeeded to Ward's drops; it is possible by this time that some other quackery has taken place of that; the English are easier than any other nation infatuated by the prospect of universal medicines; nor is there any country in the world where the doctors raise such immense fortunes. I attribute it to the fund of credulity which is in all mankind. We have no longer faith in miracles and

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religion, and therefore, with the same fury, run after receipts and physicians. The same money which, three hundred years ago, was given for the health of the soul, is now given for the health of the body, and by the same sort of people,—women and half-witted men: in the country where they have shrines and images, quacks are despised, and monks and confessors find their account in managing the fear and hope which rule the actions of the multitude."

To her daughter, the Countess of Bute, (Louvere, Aug. 21, 1749):—

"I am solicitous to see Lord Bolingbroke's works. All the writings I have seen of his appeared to me to be copied from the French eloquence. I mean a poor or trite thought dressed in pompous language. . . ."

To the same (October 15):—

"I have read S. Fielding's works,* and should be glad to hear what is become of her. All the other books would be new to me excepting *Pamela*, which has met with very extraordinary, and (I think) undeserved

* Sarah Fielding, (1714–1768) was the third sister of the great novelist. She was a woman of cultivated mind, with some power of invention, and a quick eye for character. Among her works are 'Adventures of David Simple,' 'Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia,' and 'History of Ophelia.'

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success. It has been translated into French and into Italian; it was all the fashion at Paris and Versailles, and is still the joy of the chambermaids of all nations."

To the same (December 14, 1750):—

"I desired you would send me all the books of which you gave me a catalogue, except Henry Fielding's and his sister's, which I have already. I thank God, my taste still continues for the gay part of reading. Wiser people may think it trifling, but it serves to sweeten life to me, and is at worst better than the generality of conversation."

To the same (February 16, 1752):—

"I received yesterday the case of books you were so good to send to me. . . . I began by your direction with *Peregrine Pickle*. I think Lady Vane's memoirs, introduced in Smollett's romance [under the title of 'Memoirs of a Lady of Quality'], contain more truth and less malice than any I ever read in my life. When she speaks of her now being disinterested, I am apt to believe she really thinks so herself, as many highwaymen, after having no possibility of retrieving the character of honesty, please themselves with that of being generous, because whatever they get on the road, they always spend at the next ale-house, and are still as beggarly as ever. Her

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history, rightly considered, would be more instructive to young women than any sermon I know. They may see then what mortifications and variety of misery are the unavoidable consequences of gallantry. I think there is no rational creature that would not prefer the life of the strictest Carmelite to the round of hurry and misfortune she has gone through. Her style is clear and concise, with some strokes of humour, which appear to me so much above her, I can't help being of opinion the whole has been modelled by the author of the book in which it is inserted, who is some subaltern admirer of hers." [In the latter supposition, Lady Mary was mistaken. She continues to criticise the other books sent by her daughter; but 'Leonora,' and 'The Parish Girl,' and 'Pompey the Little,' are wholly unknown to readers of the present generation.]

To the same (London, June 23rd, 1752) :—

"I have always avoided the conversation of those who endeavour to raise an opinion of their understanding, by ridiculing what both law and decency obliges them to revere; but, whenever I have met with any of these bright spirits who would be smart on sacred subjects, I have ever cut short their discourse by asking them if they had any lights and

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revelations by which they would propose new articles of faith? Nobody can deny but religion is a comfort to the distressed, a cordial to the sick, and sometimes a restraint; therefore, whoever would argue or laugh it out of the world, ought to be treated as a common enemy; but when this language comes from a churchman [she refers to Dean Swift], who enjoys large benefices and dignities from that very Church he openly despises, it is an object of horror for which I want a name, and can only be excused by madness, which I think the Dean was always strongly touched with."

This, it must be owned, is but a sorry defence of religion, which Lady Mary evidently could not understand as the inspiration that ought to influence our daily life; still, it is not altogether discreditable to the writer, considering the social conditions under which she was trained, and the depraved worldliness of the atmosphere she breathed for so many years. The criticisms on men and books scattered through her letters are almost always just and forcible, and her natural good sense lifted her far above the corrupt taste of most of her contemporaries. Thus she speaks of the 'Memoirs of Harriet Stewart,' the first but not the worst novel of Mrs. Charlotte

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Lennox (best known, perhaps, as the author of the 'Female Quixote'), with discriminating severity. The heroine, she says, though intended for an example of wit and virtue, is a jilt and a fool in every page. And of the other characters she speaks as marvellous figures, no more resembling anything in human nature than the wooden cut in the 'Seven Champions of Christendom.'

There is cleverness in her comment on Richardson's novels :—

"I was such an old fool as to weep over *Clarissa Harlowe*, like any milkmaid of sixteen over the ballad of the 'Ladies' Fall.' To say truth, the first volume softened me by a near resemblance of my maiden days; but on the whole 'tis most miserable stuff. Miss How, who is called a young lady of sense and honour, is not very extremely silly, but a more vicious character than Sally Martin; whose crimes are owing at first to seduction, and afterwards to necessity; while this virtuous damsel, without any reason, insults her mother at home, and ridicules her abroad; abuses the man she marries, and is impertinent and impudent with great applause. Even that model of perfection Clarissa is so faulty in her behaviour as to deserve little compassion. Any girl that runs away with a young fellow, and without intend-

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ing to marry him, should be carried to Bridewell or to Bedlam the next day. Yet the circumstances are so laid as to inspire tenderness, notwithstanding the low style and absurd incidents; and I look upon this and *Pamela* to be two books that will do more general mischief than the works of Lord Rochester."

We confess to an agreement with Lady Mary in her low estimate of the moral tone of Richardson's prolix novels. Perhaps Fielding did not err greatly in looking upon the author of 'Pamela' as a "solemn prig."

To her daughter (Brescia, October 10, 1752):—

"There is no part of the world where our sex is treated with so much contempt as in England. I do not complain of men for having engrossed the government; in excluding us from all degrees of power, they preserve us from many fatigues, many dangers, and perhaps many crimes. . . . But I think it the highest injustice to be debarred the entertainment of my closet, and that the same studies which raise the character of a man, should hurt that of a woman. We are educated in the grossest ignorance, and no art omitted to stifle our natural reason; if some few get above their nurses' instructions, our knowledge must rest concealed, and be as useless to the world as gold in the mine. . . . It appears to me the strongest

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proof of a clear understanding in Longinus (in every light acknowledged one of the greatest men among the ancients), when I find him so far superior to vulgar prejudices, as to choose his two examples of fine writing from a Jew (at that time the most despised people upon earth) and a woman. Our modern wits would be so far from quoting, they would scarce own they had read the works of such contemptible creatures, though perhaps they would condescend to steal from them, at the same time they declared they were below their notice."

In writing to her daughter (January 28, 1753), she proves that her appetite for reading led her to many books which were neglected by her contemporaries :—

"I remember, when I was a girl, I saved one of my companions from destruction, who communicated to me an epistle she was quite charmed with. As she had naturally a good taste, she observed the lines were not so smooth as Prior's or Pope's, but had more thought and spirit than any one of theirs. She was wonderfully delighted with such a demonstration of her lover's sense and passion, and not a little pleased with her own charms, that had force enough to inspire such elegances. In the midst of this triumph I showed her that they were taken from Randolph's

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Poems, and the unfortunate transcriber was dismissed with the scorn he deserved. To say truth, the poor plagiary was very unlucky to fall into my hands; that author, being no longer in fashion, would have escaped any one of less universal reading than myself."

We suspect that Randolph, though Ben Jonson thought so highly of him as to call him "son," is no more "in fashion" now than in Lady Mary's days. We suppose she had read his 'Muse's Looking Glass,' but notwithstanding the elegance of his style, and the gracefulness of his fancy, the book is not one which we should choose for a young lady's reading.

She returns to her favourite theme of Women's Rights in a letter to her daughter, dated Louvere, March 6, 1753:—

"There's nothing," she says, "so like the education of a woman of quality as that of a prince; they are taught to dance, and the exterior part of what is called good breeding, which, if they attain they are extraordinary creatures in their kind, and have all the accomplishments required by their directors. The same characters are formed by the same lessons, which inclines me to think (if I dare say it) that nature has not placed us in an inferior rank to man, no more than the females of other animals, where we

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see no distinction of capacity; though, I am persuaded, if there was a commonwealth of rational horses (as Dr. Swift has supposed), it would be an established maxim among them, that a mare could *not* be taught to pace."

In another letter of July 13, we get a glimpse of the unconventional frankness which raised up about Lady Mary a swarm of enemies :—

"I am sorry for the untimely death of poor Lord Cornbury; he had certainly a very good heart. I have often thought it great pity it was not under the direction of a better head. I had lost his favour some time before I left England on a pleasant account. He came to me one morning with a hat full of paper, which he desired me to peruse, and tell him my sincere opinion. I trembled at the proposition, foreseeing the inevitable consequence of this confidence. However, I was not so barbarous as to tell him that his verses were extremely stupid (as God knows they were), and that he was no more inspired with the spirit of poetry than that of prophecy. I contented myself with representing to him, in the mildest terms, that it was not the business of a man of quality to turn author, and that he should confine himself to the applause of his friends, and by no

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means venture on the press. He seemed to take this advice with good humour, promised to follow it, and we parted without any dispute; but, alas! he could not help showing his performance to better judges, who, with their usual candour and good nature, earnestly exhorted him to oblige the world with this instructive piece, which was soon after published, and had the success I expected from it. Pope persuaded him, poor soul! that my declaiming against it occasioned the ill reception it met with, though this is the first time I ever mentioned it in my life, and I did not so much as guess the reason. I heard of him no more, till a few days before I left London."

Here is another bit of literary criticism (June 23, 1754):—

"The *Rambler* is certainly a strong misnomer; he always plods in the beaten road of his predecessors, following the *Spectator* (with the same pace a pack horse would do a hunter) in the style that is proper to lengthen a paper. These writers may, perhaps, be of service to the public, which is saying a good deal in their favour. There are numbers of both sexes who never read anything but such productions, and cannot spare time, from doing nothing, to go through a sixpenny pamphlet. Such gentle readers may be

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improved by a moral hint which, though repeated over and over, from generation to generation, they never heard in their lives. I should be glad to know the name of this laborious author. Henry Fielding has given a true picture of himself and his first wife, in the character of Mr. and Mrs. Booth, some compliments to his own figure excepted; and, I am persuaded, several of the incidents he mentions are real matters of fact. I wonder he does not perceive Tom Jones and Mr. Booth are sorry scoundrels. All this sort of books have the same fault, which I cannot easily pardon, being very mischievous. They place a merit in extravagant passions, and encourage young people to hope for impossible events, to draw them out of the misery they choose to plunge themselves into, expecting legacies from unknown relations, and generous benefactors to distressed virtue, as much out of nature as fairy treasures. Fielding has really a fund of true humour, and was to be pitied at his first entrance into the world, having no choice, as he said himself, but to be a hackney writer, or a hackney coachman. His genius deserved a better fate; but I cannot help blaming that continued indiscretion, to give it the softest name, that has run through his life, and I am afraid still remains. I guessed 'Rode-

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rick Random' to be his, though without his name.* I cannot think 'Ferdinand (Count) Fathom' wrote by the same hand, it is every way so much below it. Sally Fielding has amended her style in her last volume of 'David Simple,' which conveys a useful moral, though she does not seem to have intended it; I mean, shews the ill consequences of not providing against casual losses, which happen to almost everybody. . . . I am sorry not to see any more of Peregrine Pickle's performances; I wish you would tell me his name."

And again (December 19, 1754):—

"I am flattered by finding that our sentiments are the same in regard to Lord Bolingbroke's writings. . . . I believe he never read Horace, or any other author, with a design of instructing himself, thinking he was born to give precepts, and not to follow them,—at least if he was not mad enough to have this opinion, he endeavoured to impose it on the rest of the world. All his works, being well considered, are little more than a panegyric on his own universal genius; many of his pretensions are as preposterously inconsistent, as if Sir Isaac Newton had aimed at being a critic in fashions, and wrote for the information of tailors and

* The reader does not need to be told that 'Roderick Random' 'Count Fathom,' and 'Peregrine Pickle,' are all by Smollett.

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mantua-makers. I am of opinion that he never looked into half the authors he quotes, and am much mistaken if he is not obliged to M. Bayle for the generality of his criticisms; for which reason he affects to despise him, that he may steal from him with the less suspicion. A diffusive style (though admired as florid by all half-witted readers) is commonly obscure, and always trifling. Horace has told us, that where words abound, sense is thinly spread; as trees overcharged with leaves bear little fruit."

Her estimate of Madame de Sévigné is surely influenced by a feeling that she and herself were competitors for the world's praise as letter-writers :—

"Well turned periods, or smooth lines, are not the perfection either of prose or verse; they may serve to adorn, but can never stand in the place of, good sense. Copiousness of words, however ranged, is always false eloquence, though it will ever impose on some sort of understandings. How many readers and admirers has Madame de Sévigné, who only gives us, in a lively manner, and fashionable phrases, mean sentiments, vulgar prejudices, and endless repetitions? Sometimes the tittle-tattle of a fine lady, sometimes that of an old nurse, always tittle-tattle; yet so well gilt over by airy expressions, and a flowing

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style, she will always please the same people to whom Lord Bolingbroke will shine as a first-rate author."

Our space will not permit of our indulging in many more quotations, though they will help the reader better than pages of description to understand Lady Mary's character in its various aspects. For our own part it appears to us an interesting, and not altogether a disappointing study. Lax she was of speech, and unconventional of manner,—lax and unconventional to a degree which answered the evil purpose of her enemies; but her sound sense, her clear judgment, her right views of things, her keen perception of folly, her insight into character, her constant vivacity and force, have a fascination for us which we are not ashamed to acknowledge. We are confident that no unprejudiced reader can rise from a perusal of her letters without a feeling that she was deeply wronged by Pope and Walpole, and not altogether fairly or leniently judged by the world. She was the cleverest woman of her age, and her age punished her for her superiority.

Even the years had no power to force her into dulness. She was nearly seventy-one when she wrote thus brightly to Sir James Stewart (January 13th, 1761):—

"I have indulged myself some time with day-

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dreams of the happiness I hoped to enjoy this summer in the conversation of Lady Fanny and Sir James S.; but I hear such frightful stories of precipices and levels during the whole journey, I begin to fear there is no such pleasure allotted me in the book of Fate: the Alps were one-inch hills in my sight when they interposed between me and the slightest inclination; now age begins to freeze, and brings with it the usual train of melancholy apprehensions. Poor human-kind! We always march blindly on; the fire of youth represents to us all our wishes possible; and, that over, we fall into despondency that prevents even easy enterprises: a stove in winter, a garden in summer, bounds all our desires, or at least our undertakings. If Mr. Stewart would disclose all his imaginations, I dare swear he has some thoughts of emulating Alexander or Demosthenes, perhaps both; nothing seems difficult at his time of life, everything at mine. I am very unwilling, but am afraid I must submit to the confinement of my boat and my easy-chair, and go no further than they can carry me. Why are our views so extensive and our power so miserably limited? This is among the mysteries which (as you justly say) will remain ever unfolded to our shallow capacities. I am much

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inclined to think we are no more free agents than the queen of clubs when she victoriously takes prisoner the knave of hearts, and all our efforts (when we rebel against destiny) as weak as a card that sticks to a glove when the gamester is determined to throw it on the table. Let us then (which is the only true philosophy) be contented with our chance, and make the best of that very bad bargain of being born in this vile planet; where we may find, however (God be thanked), much to laugh at, though little to approve.

"I confess I delight extremely in looking on men in that light. How many thousands trample under foot honour, ease, and pleasure, in pursuit of ribands of certain colours, dabs of embroidery on their clothes, and gilt wood carved behind their coaches in a particular figure? Others breaking their hearts till they are distinguished by the shape and colour of their hats; and, in general, all people earnestly seeking what they do not want, while they neglect the real blessings in their possession; I mean the innocent gratification of their senses, which is all we can properly call our own. For my part, I will endeavour to comfort myself for the cruel disappointment I find in renouncing Tübingen, by eating some fresh oysters on the table. I hope you are sitting down

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with dear Lady Fanny, to some admirable red partridges, which I think are the growth of that country. Adieu! Live happy, and be not unmindful of your sincere distant friend, who will remember you in the tenderest manner while there is any such faculty as memory in the machine called

"M. W. MONTAGU."

Her long residence abroad was chequered by various misadventures, to which, however, only the briefest allusion is needed. Her principal place of residence was Louvere, or Lovere, near Venice, where she employed herself in building and gardening, and in rearing silkworms for commercial purposes. She made excursions in various directions, to Brescia, Rome, Venice, and Florence; and was everywhere well received. Abroad as at home she had her quarrels; but you can trace in her correspondence the gradual abatement of that satirical spirit which had made her the object of the fear and hatred of the town. She made many friends; and her enemies were chiefly those English men and women, who came to the continent with a preconceived prejudice against the free and daring wit. Writing from Florence, on the 25th of September, 1740, Horace Walpole says:—

"Did I tell you Lady Mary is here? She laughs at

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my Lady Walpole, scolds my Lady Pomfret, and is laughed at by the whole town. Her dress, her avarice, and her impudence must amaze anyone that never heard her name. She wears a foul mob that does not cover her great black locks, that hang loose, never combed or curled; an old mazarine blue wrapper, that gapes open and discovers a canvas petticoat. Her face swelled violently on one side, with the remains of . . . partly covered with plaister, and partly with white paint, which for cheapness she has bought so coarse that you would not use it to wash a chimney." It is needless to say that Walpole here permits himself the exaggeration of the caricaturist; but his language enables one to form an idea of the malignant spirit in which she was regarded by some of the big little personages of English Society. On the contrary, her cousin, Miss Elizabeth Montagu, writing of her after her return to England, when she was seventy-two years old, says: "She does not look older than when she went abroad, has more than the vivacity of fifteen, and a memory which is perhaps unique." Continuing her sketch, she draws the portrait of a woman who thought for herself, acted for herself, and did not shrink from the imputation of eccentricity. "Several people

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visited her out of curiosity, which she did not like. I visit her because her husband and mine were cousin-germans; and though she has not any foolish partiality for her husband and his relations, I was very graciously received, and you may imagine, entertained by one who neither thinks, speaks, acts, nor dresses like anybody else. Her domestic establishment is made up of all nations; and when you get into her drawing-room, you imagine you are in the first story of the Tower of Babel. An Hungarian servant takes your name at the door; he gives it to an Italian, who delivers it to a Frenchman; the Frenchman to a Swiss, and the Swiss to a Polander; so that by the time you get to her ladyship's presence, you have changed your name five times without the expense of an Act of Parliament."

Lady Mary's return to her native country was probably connected with the settlement of the affairs of her husband, who died in 1761. According to Mr. Dallaway, it took place at the solicitation of her daughter. She arrived in October; but her health had suffered greatly, and a gradual decline terminated in death on the 21st of August, 1762. The direct cause was cancer, which, with indomitable courage,

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she had long concealed. "I met her," says Miss Montagu, "at my Lady Bute's in June, and she then looked well; in three weeks after, at my return to London, I heard she was given over. The hemlock kept her drowsy and free from pain; and the physicians thought, if it had been given early, it might have saved her."

"She survived her return home," says Lady Louisa Stuart, "too short a time to afford much more matter for anecdotes. Those who could remember her arrival, spoke with delight of the clearness, vivacity, and raciness of her conversation, and the youthful vigour which seemed to animate her mind. She did not appear displeased at the general curiosity to see her, nor void of curiosity herself concerning the new things and people that her native country presented to her view, after so long an absence; yet had her life lasted half as many years as it did months, the probability is that she would have gone abroad again; for her habits had become completely foreign in all those little circumstances, the sum of which must constitute the comfort or discomfort of every passing day. She was accustomed to foreign servants, and to the spaciousness of a foreign dwelling. Her description of the harpsichord-

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shaped house she inhabited, in one of the streets bordering upon Hanover Square, grew into a proverbial phrase. 'I am most handsomely lodged,' said she; 'I have two very decent closets, and a cupboard on each floor.' This served to laugh at, but would not be a pleasant exchange for the Italian palazzo."

But we must take our leave of Lady Mary, whom we have shown, we think, to have been a woman more sinned against than sinning; a woman whose constitutional vivacity and animal spirits fretted incessantly against the conventional forms of an artificial condition of Society; whose knowledge of superior intellectual power, made her unwisely scornful of the opinion of those who surrounded her; whose warmth of disposition betrayed her into a frankness of language which her capacity for satire rendered doubly dangerous; a woman capable of strong affections, as her intercourse with her daughter proved, and who would have been a devoted wife to a husband, able at once to guide and sympathise with her; and a woman who, fortunate in the possession of beauty, wit, sound sense, and rare charm of manner, was unfortunate in that liveliness of disposition which provoked the enmity of a Walpole and a Pope. But, as the reader has seen, we

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do not believe her failings to have been of a very heinous character and are content to excuse them, such as they were, in acknowledgment of the pleasure that posterity has derived from her charming letters.

It is in these letters that she appears to the best advantage, but her other writings are at least respectable, and her poems, if wanting in those higher qualities which characterise true poetry, are smoothly written, and surperior to much of the verse of the period. An extract or two may be acceptable to the reader:—

Song:—Rondeau.

Finish those languors! Oh! I'm sick,
Of dying airs I know the trick;
Long since I've learned to well explain
Th' unmeaning cant of fire and pain,
And see through all the senseless lies
Of burning darts from killing eyes;
I'm tired with this continual rout
Of bowing low, and leading out.
Finish, etc.

Finish this tedious dangling trade
By which so many fools are made;
For fools they are, whom you can please
By such affected airs as these;

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At opera near my box to stand,
And slyly press the given hand.
Thus may you wait whole years in vain;
But sure you would, were you in pain.
Finish, etc.

Melinda's Complaint.

[A Parody on Rowe's ballad, 'Despairing beside a clear stream.']

By the side of a glimmering fire,
Melinda sat pensively down,
Impatient of rural esquire,
And vex'd to be absent from Town.
The cricket, from under the grate,
With a chirp to her sighs did reply;
And the kitten, as grave as a cat,
Sat mournfully purring hard by.

"Alas! silly maid that I was,"
Thus sadly complaining, she cried;
"When first I forsook that dear place,
'Twere better by far I had died:
How gaily I passed the long day,
In a round of continual delight;
Parks, visits, assemblies, and play,
And quadrille to enliven the night!

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"How simple was I to believe
Delusive poetical dreams!
The flattering landskips they give
Of groves, meads, and murmuring streams.
Bleak mountains, and wild staring rocks,
Are the wretched result of my pains;
The swains greater brutes than their flocks,
And the nymphs as polite as the swains.

"What though I have skill to ensnare,
Where Stuarts in bright circles abound;
What tho' at St. James's at prayers,
Beaux ogle devoutly around:
Fond virgin, thy power is lost
On a race of rude Hottentot brutes;
What glory in being the toast
Of noisy dull 'squires in boots?

"And thou, my companion, so dear,
My all that is left of relief,
Whatever I suffer, forbear—
Forbear to dissuade me from grief:
'Tis in vain then, you'll say, to repine
At ills which cannot be redressed,
But in sorrows so pungent as mine,
To be patient, alas! is a test.

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"If, further to soothe my distress,
Thy tender compassion is led,
Call Jenny to help me undress,
And decently put me to bed.
The last humble solace I wait.
Would Heaven indulge me the boon,
Some dream less unkind than my fate
In a vision transport me to Town.

"Clarissa, meantime, weds a beau
Who decks her in golden array;
The finest at every fine show,
And flaunts it at Park and at Play;
Whilst here we are left in the lurch,
Forgot and secluded from view,
Unless when some bumpkin at church,
Stares wistfully over the pew."

Our last extract is of a graver character:—

Written at Louvere, 1755.

Wisdom, slow product of laborious years,
The only fruit that life's cold winter bears;
Thy sacred seeds in vain in youth we lay,
By the fierce storm of passion torn away.
Should some remain in a rich gen'rous soil,
They long lie hid, and must be rais'd with toil;
Faintly they struggle with inclement skies,
No sooner born than the poor planter dies.

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That she could write French with elegance and spirit, and might, had she so desired, have gained success as an inventor of *féerie,* is evident from her attractive fable of 'Carabosse,' addressed to the Abbè Conti. As it is almost wholly unknown, we reproduce it here, with a free translation :—

Il y avait autrefois un Prince et une Princesse (car c'est ainsi que ma nourrice commençoit tous les contes dont elle me berçoit). Le Prince estoit brave et généreux, la Princesse belle et sage : leurs vertus, et leur amour réciproque et constant, faisoient tout à la fois la gloire et la honte du siècle. Mais comme il n'y a point de félicité parfaite, il leur manquoit des enfans : les temples de tous les dieux estoient chargés de leurs offrandes, et toutes les bonnes fées des environs de leurs présents, pour obtenir la seule chose qu'ils avoient à souhaiter. Il est vrai qu'on ne put jamais persuader à la Princesse de rechercher les mauvaises, et c'etoit en vain que le Prince réprésentoit que les méchantes pouvoient nuire avec autant de facilité que les bienfaisantes pouvoient servir ; elle disoit toujours que faire la cour aux vicieux estoit une espèce de culte rendue au vice, et elle ne pouvoit s'y résoudre. On dit même qu'elle s'émancipoit quelquefois à blâmer

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leur conduite d'une façon un peu téméraire. Enfin ses vœux furent comblés, elle devint grosse. Elle n'oublia pas de prier à ses couches toutes les fées de ses amies, et elle leur préparoit des présents dignes de leur estres offerts. Donner des pierreries ou de l'or aux maîtresses des mines, auroit été leur faire un affront. Elle sçavoit qu'elles en font si peu de cas, qu'elles en comblent souvent les mortels les plus indignes pour en mieux marquer leur mépris. Elle avait ramassé par les soins infinis de beaux vers passionnés composés par des amants sincères, le portrait d'une belle religieuse qui n'avoit jamais pensé à l'amour profane, une phiole (très petite à la vérité) des larmes versées par une jeune et riche veuve seule dans son cabinet.

Les fées etoient toutes étonnées d'où elle auroit pu trouver tant de choses rares et précieuses ; elles estoient empressées de temoigner leur reconnoissance en rendant son enfant la personne du monde la plus accomplie et la plus heureuse. Elle mit au monde une petite Princesse : à peine avoit-elle vu la lumière que la fée Bellinde s'écria, "Je la doue d'une beauté noble et touchante." Elle n'avoit pas cessé de parler quand on entendoit un bruit comme de cent canons déchargés à la fois, un sifflement comme de mille serpents furieux, et on vit descendre par la cheminée la fée Carabosse,

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montée à califourchons sur un énorme crapaud. Je ne veux salir mon papier par la description de sa figure, faite pour inspirer le dégoût et l'horreur. "Je veux," crioit-elle d'une voix rauque, "que cette fille chérie perde cette beauté admirable par la petite vérole dans l'âge qu'elle commence à sentir ses avantages." La fée Spirituelle, se flattant d'adoucir ce malheur, disoit, "Je la doue d'une mémoire la plus heureuse qui ait jamais été, d'un goût juste, d'une vivacité surprenante, tempérée par un jugement qui réglera toutes ses paroles; elle excellera dans tous les genres d'écrire; elle sera sçavante sans vanité, et vive sans étourderie." "Ce bel esprit," répliqua Carabosse, avec un souris dédaigneux, "ne servira qu'à lui attirer les ennemis; elle seroit toujours un proye aux sots; déchirée par leurs assiduités." "Je veux," disoit la brillante Argentine, en s'avançant, "que son père soit le plus riche seigneur de son rang, et que son mari ait des millions d'or." "Oui," interrompit Carabosse, "elle vivra au milieu des trésors sans en voir jamais à sa disposition." "Je lui donne," disoit Hygéia, "une santé à toute épreuve, que ni les chagrins ni les fatigues ne pourront diminuer." "Cette santé," répondit Carabosse, "lui inspirera la hardiesse de tenter des entreprises téméraires, et de risquer des dangers dont elle seroit toujours envi-

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ronnée." "Elle aura," disoit l'aimable Harmonie, "l'oreille juste et un goût exquis pour la musique—" "Je lui oste," crioit Carabosse, en lui coupant la parole, "le pouvoir de chanter, pour qu'elle sente toute la rage du désir et de l'impuissance."

Les bonnes fées, consternées de voir leurs bénédictions empoisonnées, se parloient tout bas, et consultoient en quelle manière on pouvoit vaincre cette malice infernale. Spirituelle crut avoir trouver un expédient infaillible. "Il faut lui oster," disoit-elle, "tous les vices, et elle se trouvera garantie des malheurs qui en sont la suite. Je lui oste," ajouta-t-elle d'un ton haut et ferme, "toutes les semences de l'envie et de l'avarice, qui sont les sources des misères de l'humanité; elle aura l'humeur douce et égale—" "Et un grand fonds de tendresse," s'écria Carabosse avec un éclat de rire qui faisoit trembler le palais. Les fées bienfaisantes s'envolèrent, ne voiant aucun remède à tant de maux. La Princesse mourut de chagrin; son enfant s'embellissoit chaque jour; mais .... Ici le manuscrit est défectueux.

(Translation.)

Once upon a time lived a Prince and a Princess (for it was thus my nurse would begin all the stories with

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which she lulled me to sleep). Brave and generous was the Prince, the Princess as wise as she was beautiful; their virtues, and their mutual and unchanging love, made them at once the glory and the shame of their age. But, as no human happiness can be perfect, they were childless: the temples of all the gods were loaded with their offerings, and all the good fairies of the neighbourhood with their presents, to obtain the only thing that was left them to desire. It is true that the Princess could not be persuaded to seek out the bad fairies, and it was in vain the Prince represented that they could do harm with as much ease as the beneficent would do good; she always replied that to pay court to the vicious was a kind of worship rendered to vice, and she would not adopt it. It is even said that at times she blamed their conduct in a somewhat venturesome manner. At length her wishes were fulfilled. She became pregnant. She did not forget to invite to her accouchement all her fairy friends, and prepared presents worthy of their acceptance. Gifts of precious stones or jewels to the mistresses of the mines would have been an insult; she knew that they value them so little that they often accumulate them on the unworthiest of mortals the better to show their con-

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tempt of them. With infinite care she had collected some fine passionate verses composed by sincere lovers, the portrait of a beautiful religious who had never felt a throb of profane love, a vial ('tis true a very small one) of the tears shed by a young and rich widow in the solitude of her closet, and some books of theology which had never wearied anybody. The fairies wondered greatly where she could have found so many rare and precious things, and were eager to show their gratitude by making her child the happiest and most accomplished person in the world.

She gave birth to a little Princess; who had scarcely seen the light before the fairy Bellinda cried, "I endow her with a noble and touching beauty." She had not ceased speaking when a roar like that of a hundred cannons was heard, a hissing like that of a thousand furious serpents, and down the chimney descended the fairy Carabosse, straddling across an enormous toad. I do not wish to sully my paper with the description of her figure, which was made to inspire disgust and horror. With a hoarse voice she exclaimed: "May this child lose her admirable beauty by small-pox at the age when she begins to understand its advantages." The fairy Spirituella, in the hopes of mitigating this misfortune, said: "I bestow upon her the finest

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memory which has ever been known, an exact taste, and a surprising vivacity, tempered by a judgment which shall control all her utterances. She shall excel in every kind of composition, she shall be learned without vanity, and lively without forwardness." "That admirable wit," retorted Carabosse, smiling disdainfully, "shall be useful only to excite enemies; she shall be always a prey to fools, perturbed by their maliciousness, and importuned by their assiduities." "It is my will," said the brilliant Argentine, advancing, "that the father shall become the wealthiest lord of his rank, and that her husband shall have millions of gold." "Yes," interrupted Carabosse, "she shall live in the midst of treasures without having the disposal of them." "I bestow upon her," said Hygeia, "the gift of perfect health, which neither grief nor fatigue shall be able to impair." "That health," replied Carabosse, "shall inspire her with the audacity to attempt the rashest enterprises, and to invite the dangers by which she shall always be surrounded." "She shall possess," said the amiable Harmonia, "an exact ear and exquisite taste for music." "I deprive her," cried Carabosse, interrupting, "of the power of singing, for which she

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shall feel all the rage of desire and yet be checked by a sense of incompetence."

The good fairies, alarmed at the way in which their blessings were turned to curses, consulted together in whispers how best they might overcome such diabolical malice. Spirituella thought she had found an infallible expedient: "We must ensure her," she said, "against every vice, and the misfortunes which follow in their train. I free her," she added, in a firm, loud voice, "of all the germs of envy and avarice which are the sources of the misery of humanity. She shall possess a sweet and equable temper—" "And a great capacity of tenderness," cried Carabosse, with a shout of laughter which shook the palace. The beneficent fairies flew away, despairing to find any remedy for so great an evil. The Princess died of grief; her child grew more beautiful every day; but . . . . . Here the manuscript abruptly terminates.

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LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

BORN, 1690; DIED, 1762.

A comparison with her ladyship's predecessors of her own sex and quality will redound to her superiority. Lady Jane Grey read Plato in Greek, and the two daughters of the last Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, the Duchess of Norfolk and Lady Lumley, translated and published books from that language; but theirs was the learning of the cloister, and not that of the world. Nearer her own time, the Duchess of Newcastle composed folios of romances, but her imaginary personages are strangers to this lower sphere, and are disgusting by their pedantry and unnatural manners. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu applied her learning to improve her knowledge of the world. She read mankind as she had read her books, with sagacity and discrimination. The influence of a classical education over her mind was apparent in the purity of her style, rather than in the ambition of displaying her acquirements, whilst it enabled her to give grace of expression and novelty to maxims of morality or prudence, which would have lost much of their usefulness had they been communicated in a less agreeable manner.

Dallaway.

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THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

A.D. 1660–1744.

I.

In a small house at Holywell, a suburb of the ancient city of St. Albans, was born, on the 27th of May, 1660, to a country squire of the name of Jennings, a daughter, who was destined to become the ornament of a Court, and the counsellor of a Queen.

The Jennings family could boast of an honourable lineage, and the father of Sarah Jennings, though not wealthy, was the owner of an estate at Sandridge, in Hertfordshire, which enabled him to maintain a decent appearance. Sarah was one of five children, three of whom pre-deceased her. Her eldest sister, Frances, was placed in the service of Anne Hyde, Duchess of York; and by her charms obtained that sobriquet of "La belle Jennings," which has been handed down to us in the pages of Count Grammont. Sarah soon followed her sister to the gay court of Charles II., and

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on the death of the Duchess, was preferred to the service of her successor, Maria Beatrix d'Este, Princess of Medina, the second wife of James. Here she became the playmate, and afterwards the trusted friend, of the Princess Anne, over whose weak mind she soon exercised that influence which belongs to a strong one; and in this position she escaped all the entanglements of a dissolute Court, preserving her reputation unsullied, though her remarkable beauty drew around her many admirers.

She had scarcely completed her sixteenth year when her personal charms and her witty conversation engaged the attention of a young soldier whose career had already procured him distinction, and the promise of whose future was sufficiently brilliant. Colonel Churchill then held the post of master of the robes to the Duke of York. The son of a gallant cavalier, Sir Winston Churchill, he had entered the army at an early age, and serving on the Continent in several campaigns, had risen rapidly through his singular courage and military skill. At the siege of Nimeguen, he gained the approval of the illustrious Turenne, who thenceforward spoke of him as his "handsome Englishman," and selected him for any service of special importance. He was present at the siege

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of Maestricht, and in 1674, at the battle of Singheim.

A mutual attachment arose between this splendid warrior and the conspicuous beauty of the Duchess Mary's Court. The one was surely worthy of the other. The colonel was not less remarkable than the maid of honour for graces of person. He was tall of stature, with a dignified and yet winning bearing, a manner which so good a judge as Lord Chesterfield declared to be irresistible, and intellectual powers of no common order. The course of true love, however, did not run entirely smooth, as was to be expected when the lady to be wooed had the imperious temper of Sarah Jennings. But if there were quarrels, there were also reconciliations; and the hauteur of the lady did not disgust the sensibility of her suitor. The greater her reserve the more vehement was his passion. This hero, so cool and composed on the field of battle, trembled before a woman's frown and glowed with ardour in her smile. At length she consented to become his wife; but then fresh difficulties sprang up. The Colonel's father was desirous that he should advance his fortunes by a marriage with a lady of wealth; and he himself was compelled to own that his means were insufficient to the maintenance of an

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adequate position. Sarah Jennings took alarm at the rumour which reached her of an intended alliance. She reproached him bitterly with his selfishness and unfaithfulness; but declared that she would cancel their engagement, and accompany her sister Frances, then Countess of Hamilton, on an intended journey to Paris. Churchill replied with an eager assurance of his loyalty, and an earnest appeal for their immediate union. The good offices of the Duchess of York seem also to have been forthcoming; and the marriage took place in her presence, some time in the spring of 1668. At first it was kept secret. A letter addressed by Colonel Churchill to his wife, from Brussels, on the 12th of April, is directed to Miss Jennings; but the Duchess has indorsed it with these words: "I believe I was married when this was written, but it was not known to any but the Duchess."

For several years Colonel Churchill had no "settled home," and was constrained to submit to frequent separations from his beloved wife. A daughter, Henrietta, was born to him on the 19th of July, 1681. He continued assiduous in the discharge of his military duties, and was frequently employed by the Duke of York on confidential missions of the greatest delicacy.

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He accompanied him on his return to England after his temporary exclusion in 1682; and was in attendance upon him on board the Gloucester yacht when that vessel was wrecked in the Yarmouth Roads, and many persons of distinction lost their lives. The Colonel was among the few who escaped, being invited by James himself to take his place in the boat which rowed for the shore, as soon as the impossibility of saving the vessel became apparent.

His services were rewarded in the following year by his elevation to the peerage as Baron Churchill of Eyemouth, in Scotland, and in 1683 he was appointed Colonel of the third regiment of Horse-guards. These honours would seem to have satisfied his ambition, for he now announced his intention of retiring from the Court. Had he carried out that intention, it is probable that England would have lost the fame of her greatest military commander, and the history of Europe might have been very differently written. But the marriage of Lady Churchill's former playmate and constant friend, the Princess Anne, changed the current of his fortunes. Lady Churchill was appointed lady of her royal highness's bed-chamber; and this new position opened up to her and her husband a prospect of future influence

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which proved more attractive than that of rural retirement.

Never were two persons more unlike than the Princess and her friend. The former was phlegmatic, tranquil, a stickler for etiquette, exact in trifles, gracious in manner, without mental power, but by no means deficient in shrewdness; altogether a weak nature, but, like all weak natures, prone to an excess of obstinacy in the belief that it will be mistaken for firmness. The latter was a woman of quick and impetuous temper; warm in her friendships, open in her resentments; imperious in her bearing, loud and hasty in her speech; with a strong intellect, but wanting in prudence; and an arrogance of disposition that nothing could subdue. That the friendship of two such dissimilar characters could be permanent was impossible; that it lasted so long is sufficiently wonderful, and can be explained only on the ground that a weak mind shrinks from breaking the fetters of habit, however wearisome they may have become, until it is assisted and strengthened by some external influence. But at the outset it amounted, at least on the Princess's part, almost to a passion. The correspondence that passed between them might have been mistaken for that of lovers.

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The distinctions of rank were cast aside that no restraint might be put upon the expressions of their mutual affection.* The Princess became "Mrs. Morley;" Lady Churchill, "Mrs. Freeman." We cannot discover the reason for the Princess's choice; the latter was adopted as "conformable to the frankness" of the lady of the bedchamber's disposition. The intercourse between the two soon assumed the familiarity which this strange expedient was calculated to suggest.

On Anne's part it is probably true that, as the Duchess suggests, she wanted a friend. "A friend was what she most coveted; and for the sake of friendship (a relation which she did not disdain to have with *me*), she was fond of that *quality* which she thought belonged to it." The Duchess, we imagine, was at one time really attached to her royal mistress; not with the loyalty of a subject; not with the devotion

* "She grew uneasy to be treated by me with the form and ceremony due to her rank; nor could she bear from me the sound of words which implied in them distance and superiority. It was this turn of mind which made her one day propose to me, that whenever I should ever happen to be absent from her, we might in our letters write ourselves by feigned names."—'An Account of the Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough,' etc., p. 15.

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of a friend; but with that feeling of interest which arises from a sense of superiority and protection. We see no reason for believing that at first it was connected with any ambitious hopes. But as the prospect of Anne's ascending the English throne grew brighter and more distinct, there can be no question that both Lady Churchill and her husband began to appreciate the advantages of the position which the former occupied as the friend, favourite, and adviser of the future soverign.

"I both obtained and held this place," says the Duchess," without the assistance of flattery—a charm which, in truth, the Princess's inclination for me, together with my unwearied application to serve and amuse her, rendered needless; but which, had it been otherwise, my temper and turn of mind would never have suffered me to employ. Young as I was when I first became this high favourite, I laid it down as a maxim, that flattery was falsehood to my trust, and ingratitude to my dearest friend. From this rule I never swerved; and though my temper and my notions in most things were widely different from those of the Princess, yet, during a long course of years, she was so far from being displeased with me for openly speaking my sentiments, that she sometimes professed a desire,

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and even added her command, that it should be always continued, promising never to be offended at it, but to love me the better for my frankness."

This statement is confirmed by a letter from the Princess in which she says :—"If you will not let me have the satisfaction of hearing from you again before I see you, let me beg of you not to call me your highness at every word, but to be as free with me as one friend ought to be with another ; and you can never give me a greater proof of your friendship than in letting me your mind freely in all things, which I do beg you to do ; and if ever it were in my power to serve you, nobody would be more ready than myself. I am all impatience for Wednesday, till when, farewell."

After the accession of James II. Lady Churchill retained her post in the household of the Princess, who resided at her palace in the Cockpit, Westminster, and held there a small and by no means lively court. Her income did not exceed £20,000 a year ; and was insufficient for any purposes of pomp or pleasure. Her maternal duties occupied her mind, however, and provided her with all the recreation it needed. Her first living child, a daughter, died, when a year old, in 1686 ;—another was carried off almost

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at the same age. Meantime, the history of England was being crowded with stirring events. The rebellion of Monmouth was subdued at Sedgemoor, mainly through the military capacity of Lord Churchill. Then came the execution of Monmouth; the birth of a son to James II.; that monarch's attempts to restore the Roman Catholic religion; and the long series of incidents which led to his abdication and deposition, and the accession of William of Orange to the English throne. To events of so startling an importance Anne and her advisers could not be indifferent. Lord Churchill, whatever his faults, must be credited with a sincere attachment to the Reformed Church of England; and that this was well known to James is evident from the fact that after the termination of Monmouth's insurrection he ceased to be employed in the public service. For awhile he stood aloof from the political intrigues which were being actively conducted; but the King's innovations in 1681 roused him to activity. He joined the powerful party which had already begun to look to the Prince of Orange as a possible sovereign; and conveyed to that Prince assurances of his loyalty to the Protestant cause. He announced also the resolve of the Princess Anne rather to sacrifice her feelings as a daughter than to

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abandon her religion; a resolution which she would hardly have adopted or maintained without the advice and support of Lady Churchill and her husband.

How far in giving this advice they were actuated by selfish considerations it is unnecessary to inquire. Human motives are generally of a mingled character, neither wholly good nor wholly bad; and if we admit that the Churchills were not insensible to the dictates of ambition, it would be manifestly unjust not to credit them also with sincerity in their attachment to Protestantism. We see no reason to doubt the brilliant soldier's honesty when, in writing to the Prince of Orange, he said, "My places and the King's favour I set at nought, in comparison of being true to my religion. In all things but this the King may command me; and I call God to witness, that even with joy I should expose my life for his service, so sensible am I of his favours." Macaulay, in accordance with his usual plan of writing history, represents Marlborough from first to last as a politician insensible to everything but the greed of gain, and allows him no sentiment of honour or impulse of sincerity. This, however, is not a portrait, but a caricature. Marlborough lived in an age when the moral standard

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was by no means elevated, and the virtue of patriotism was debased by personal considerations. He was neither worse nor better than his contemporaries; but his public conduct as a whole shows that he understood and appreciated the principles of constitutional government, and we believe that his defection from James II. was honestly due to his abhorrence of Popery and arbitrary power.

After the landing of William, James II. sought to regain the confidence of Churchill by intrusting him with the command of a brigade of the army of defence, and raising him to the rank of lieutenant-general. He could not have refused either the post or the honour without danger to himself and the cause he had espoused. But suspicions of his fidelity were entertained by the commander-in-chief, Lord Feversham, who advised his immediate arrest, on the ground that the defection of so distinguished an officer would produce a disastrous impression. James, for various reasons, rejected the proposal; but some hint of it reached the person against whom it was directed, and on the following day, Churchill, with the Duke of Grafton, Colonel Berkeley, and other officers of his regiment, went over to the Prince.

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His example was speedily followed by Prince George of Denmark; and at nearly the same time the Princess Anne, accompanied by Lady Churchill, secretly left the palace, and retired to the Bishop of London's mansion, whence she proceeded to Oxford to meet her husband. Her conduct in thus deserting her father has been severely censured, and certainly it cannot be easily defended. One could have wished that the affection of the daughter had, in such circumstances, prevailed over the policy of the Princess. On the other hand, if it cannot be wholly justified, it must be admitted that the difficulties of the Princess's situation to some extent excused it. And it may very well be that, as she herself declared, she was divided between affection to a father and duty to a husband. If the balance were finally weighed down by self-interest, we must remember that she had been bred in an atmosphere of selfishness, and that her father himself had never set in his own person an example of generosity or chivalrous honour.

On their way to Oxford, the Princess and her party rested at Nottingham, under the charge of the Earl of Devonshire. Among the attendants was

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a young officer of volunteers, named Colley Cibber, afterwards famous as a dramatist, who has put on record an interesting memorandum of the occasion. "Being so near the chief table," he says, "you may naturally ask me what I might have heard to have passed in conversation at it, which I certainly should tell you had I attended to above two words that were uttered there, and those were 'some wine and water.' These, as I remember, came distinguished to my ear, because they came from the fair guest [Lady Churchill] whom I took such pleasure to wait on. Except at that single sound, all my senses were collected into my eyes, which, during the whole entertainment, wanted no better amusement than that of stealing now and then the delight of gazing on the fair object so near me. If so clear an emanation of beauty, such a commanding grace of aspect, struck me with a regard that had something softer than the most profound respect in it, I cannot see why I may not, without offence, remember it, since beauty, like the sun, must sometimes lose its power to choose, and shine with equal warmth on the peasant and the courtier."

The Duchess, in her published Vindication of her Conduct, asserts that the Princess's flight was "a

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thing sudden and unconcocted;" and that she herself had no share in it, beyond obeying her mistress's orders,—"though indeed," she adds, "I had reason enough on my own account to get out of the way, Lord Churchill having likewise, at that time, left the King, and gone over to the other party." It is not improbable that the flight, when it occurred, was hasty and unpremeditated, and the result of Lord Churchill's premature action; but it is certain that the possibility of its being necessary had been foreseen and provided for. If the Princess hesitated, the hesitation was overborne by the strong will of her favourite; and the mere apprehension of being deserted by the latter would be sufficient to incline her to an immediate retreat.

After the tranquillity of the country had been restored by the recognition of William and Mary, as king and queen, and the settlement of the Protestant succession, the first public matter in which Lord Churchill, now raised to the dignity of Earl of Marlborough, interested himself, was the position to be occupied by the Princess Anne, who, in return for her relinquishment of her claims to the throne, expected such an allowance as would enable her

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adequately to support her dignity as next heir. Her self-abnegation had given great offence to the Jacobites, and was attributed to the influence exercised by the Marlboroughs. "This was another event," says the Duchess, "which furnished simple people with a pretence to censure me. It was intimated that to make my court to the King and Queen, I had influenced the Princess to forego her undoubted rights. The truth is, I did persuade her to the project of that settlement, and to be easy under it after it was made. But no regard to the King nor the Queen, nor any view of ambition, had the least share in moving me to this conduct, any more than to what inconsiderable part I acted in the business of the Revolution. . . . It was evident to all the world," she continues, "that as things were carried on by King James, everybody sooner or later must be ruined who would not become a Roman Catholic. This consideration made me very well-pleased at the Prince of Orange's undertaking to rescue us from such slavery. But I do solemnly protest that, if there be truth in any mortal, I was so very simple a creature, that I never once dreamt of his being King. Having never *read*, nor employed my time in anything but playing at cards, and having no ambition myself, I imagined

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that the Prince of Orange's sole design was to provide for the safety of his own country, by obliging King James to keep the laws of ours, and that he would go back as soon as he had made us all happy; that there was no sort of difficulty in the execution of this design, and that to do so much good would be a greater pleasure to him than to be King of any country upon earth. I was soon taught to know the world better. However, as I was perfectly convinced that a Roman Catholic was not to be trusted with the liberties of England, I never once repined at the change of the Government; no, not in all the time of that persecution I went through. I might, perhaps, wish it had been compassed by some other man, who had more honour and justice than he who could depose his father-in-law and uncle to maintain liberty and the laws, and then act the tyrant himself in many instances; but I never once wished that the change had not been made."

The Duchess continues in her own characteristically straightforward, abrupt, and sledge-hammer style:—"As to giving King William the crown for life, it was the same principle of regard for the public welfare that caused me to advise the Princess to acquiesce with it. It is true that, when the thing

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was first started, I did not see any necessity for such a measure; and I thought it so unreasonable, that I took a great deal of pains (which I believe the King and Queen never forgot) to promote my mistress's pretensions. But I quickly found that all endeavours of that kind would be ineffectual; that all the principals, except the Jacobites, were for the King, and that the settlement would be carried in Parliament, whether the Princess consented to it or not. So that in reality there was nothing advisable but to yield with a good grace.

"I confess," adds the Duchess, "that, had I been in her place, I should have thought it more for my honour to be easy in this matter, than to show an impatience to get possession of a crown that had been wrested from my father. And as it ought to have been a great trouble to the children of King James to be forced to act the part they did against him, even for the security of liberty and religion (which was truly the case), so it seems to me that she who discovered the less ambition would have the more amiable character. However, as I was fearful about anything the Princess did, while she was thought to be advised by me, I could not satisfy my mind till I had consulted with several persons of undisputed

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wisdom and integrity, and particularly with Lady Russell of Southampton House, and Dr. Tillotson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, I found them all unanimous in the opinion of the *expediency of the settlement proposed, as things were situated.*"

In fact, there was no alternative between the Prince of Orange and James II., and the Princess simply acquiesced in a settlement which she could not prevent. But she took care to make her acquiescence a basis for her claims to a liberal income, while William III. and his Queen were dissatisfied at her desire to maintain a separate establishment. Altercations of an unseemly character took place between the royal sisters, which served, however, only to confirm Anne in her original purpose. Lord Marlborough strongly supported her, and it soon became evident that in the Houses of Parliament her friends were in the majority. When it was understood that she contemplated, at their instigation, a formal appeal to the Commons, the Queen called her sister to her presence, and, to use the Duchess's expression, took her to task about it. The Princess, at first, contented herself with the reply that she heard it was the intention of her friends to make her some settlement. "And pray, madam,"

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angrily retorted Mary, "what friends have you but the King and me?"

"I had not the honour," writes Duchess Sarah, "to attend the Princess that night, but when she came back, she repeated this to me. And, indeed, I never saw her express so much resentment as she did at this usage; and I think it must be allowed she had great reason, for it was unjust in her sister not to allow her a decent provision, without an entire dependence on the King. And, besides, the Princess had in a short time learned that she must be very miserable, if she was to have no support but the friendship of the two persons her Majesty had mentioned."

In the House of Commons the debate took a turn so unpleasant to the King—some of the members suggesting that the Princess's allowance should be as much as £70,000 a year—that he prorogued Parliament. But he was not in this way able to evade a decision. Pressure was brought to bear on the Countess of Marlborough that she might persuade the Princess to abandon her pretensions, the agent employed being her friend, the Viscountess Fitzharding. "Sometimes," says the Duchess, "she attacked me on the side of my own interest, telling me, that if I would

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not put an end to measures so disagreeable to the King and Queen, it would certainly be the ruin of my lord, and consequently of all our family." When she found that this had no effect, she endeavoured to alarm my fears for the Princess by saying, "that those measures would in all probability ruin her; for nobody — but such as flattered me — believed the Princess would carry her point, and in case she did not, the King would not think himself obliged to do anything for her. That it was perfect madness in me to persist, and I had better ten thousand times to let the thing fall, and to make all easy to the King and Queen."

It was now seen that the Duchess was neither to be threatened nor cajoled. The opposition did but make her more earnest in her efforts to protect the Princess's interests; and she was certainly justified in advising her not to rely upon the generosity of the parsimonious William. As the time came for the reassembling of Parliament, the King's anxiety to settle the dispute increased; and the Duke of Shrewsbury was employed to negotiate with Lady Marlborough for a cessation of hostilities on condition that the Princess's allowance was raised to £50,000 a year. The offer was accepted; and peace for awhile restored to the

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councils of the royal family. Anne was so sensible of the extent to which she was indebted for this triumphant issue to the restless energy and commanding influence of Lady Marlborough, that she desired to show her gratitude by a pension of £1000 per annum. Fearful of misconstruction, "Mrs. Freeman" at first refused the generous proposal, but upon the representations of Lord Godolphin, was induced to recall her refusal.

It was not long before fresh subjects of contention rose up between Mary and her sister. The latter deeply resented the slights put upon her husband, Prince George of Denmark, and the scant respect paid to herself or her wishes; and she and her favourite, in their conversations, as in their correspondence, applied to the King the most opprobrious terms. He was a "Caliban;" a "monster;" and a "Dutch abortion." These elegances of phraseology were carefully collected and repeated by Lady Fitzharding, whom Lady Marlborough erroneously supposed to be her friend; and necessarily produced an unpleasing effect. One evening, the Queen began, as the Princess expressed it, to pick quarrels, on the old, old subject of the annuity, suggesting that if it

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were reduced by one half, the remainder would amply suffice to maintain a suitable household. The suggestion was ill-received by the Princess; and a desperate quarrel ensued. On the following morning, Lord Marlborough, who had but just parted from the King on the most amicable terms, received formal notification of his dismissal from all his civil and military employments, and was forbidden the Court. Various causes had led to this public affront; such as Marlborough's bold remonstrances against the King's favour towards the Dutch, and the animosity of Lord Portland, but no doubt the part he had taken in obtaining the Princess's settlement, and the violent language used by his wife, were principally active in bringing it about.

The affront towards her adviser was felt by the Princess as an insult to herself, and a fresh dissension separated the royal family. No efforts were spared by Marlborough's enemies to prevent a reconciliation. The Villiers family and the Earl of Portland combined their hatred and their influence, and as they had constant access to the King, every facility was afforded for the successful development of the intrigue. By means of an unknown and anonymous correspondent (January 29, 1692), the cabal was

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revealed to the Princess, who was also informed that his enemies were not satisfied with Marlborough's dismissal, but intended that he should be imprisoned on the prorogation of Parliament. This informant added that the tears which she had been seen to shed since Marlborough's fall had provoked their Majesties; and that a meeting which the Earl had held with Godolphin and Russell had excited great jealousy at Court. He concluded by assuring her that she would be compelled to part with Lady Marlborough. Whoever the correspondent may have been, the information given was tolerably accurate.

For three weeks the angry Countess had absented herself from Court; but she was at length persuaded by her friends to attend the Princess at the Queen's levée on the 4th of February. This step appears to have been regarded as an affront, and the next morning the Princess received a harsh letter from the Queen, commanding her to dismiss her haughty favourite. "I must tell you," said the Queen, referring to the scene of the preceding evening, "it was very unkind in a sister, would have been very uncivil in an equal, and I need not say I have more to claim, which, though my kindness would make me never extort, yet when I see the use you would make of it,

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I must tell you I know what is due to me, and expect to have it from you. 'Tis upon that account, I tell you plainly, Lady Marlborough must not continue with you in the circumstances her lord is."

"I know this will be uneasy to you," writes the Queen, "and I am sorry for it; and it is very much so to me to say all this to you, for I have all the real kindness imaginable for you; and as I ever have, so will always do my part to live with you as sisters ought. That is, not only like so near relations, but like friends. And, as such, I did think to write to you. For I would have made myself believe your kindness for her made you at first forget that you should have for the King and me; and resolved to put you in mind of it myself, neither of us being willing to come to harsher ways.

"But the sight of Lady Marlborough having changed my thoughts, does naturally alter my stile. And since by that I see how little you seem to consider what even in common civility you owe us, I have told you plainly; but withal assure you, that let me have never so much reason to talk anything ill of you, my kindness is so great, that I can pass over most things, and live with you as becomes me." To this terrible invective the Princess Anne, doubtlessly under

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the advice of the hated "Lady Marlborough" replied :—

"You must needs be sensible of the kindness I have for my Lady Marlborough, to know that a command from you to part with her must be the greatest mortification in the world to me; and, indeed, of such a nature, that I might well have hoped your kindness to me would have always prevented. I am satisfied she cannot have been guilty of any fault to you; and it would be extremely to her advantage if I could here repeat every word that ever she had said to me of you in her whole life. I confess it is no small addition to my trouble to find the want of your Majesty's kindness to me upon this occasion, since I am sure I have always endeavoured to deserve it by all the actions of my life.

"Your care of my present condition is extremely obliging, and if you would be pleased to add to it so far as upon my account to recall your severe command (as I must beg leave to call it, in a matter so tender to me, and so little reasonable, as, I think, to be imposed upon me, that you would scarcely require it from the meanest of your subjects), I should ever acknowledge it as a very agreeable mark of your kindness to me. And I must as freely own, that as I think

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this proceeding can be for no other intent than to give me a very sensible mortification, so there is no misery that I cannot readily resolve to suffer rather than the thoughts of parting with her."

This correspondence lets in daylight on the petty vexations and paltry intrigues of a Court. Are all Courts the same, we wonder? Are the illustrious minds of sovereigns and princes still exercised about matters of such trivial import? England was at this time on the eve of a great continental struggle; and yet her rulers could devote their leisure and their thoughts to the over-bold language of a proud favourite, and engage in a "backstairs" conspiracy. It is all very mean and very pitiful; one sister plotting against another; the favourite of the Queen betraying the favourite of the Princess; the latter encouraging and advising her mistress in a policy of trivial opposition; and the "great ones of the earth" writing to each other in language the ungrammatical construction of which renders only more apparent the violence of the antipathies it expresses. On the surface of history how stately and majestic are the lives of kings and queens! They move along in solemn pomp, attended by courtiers, and welcomed with loud huzzas. They receive ambassadors and give audience to states-

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men. They make treaties which affect the interests of millions. They despatch armies and navies to overrun countries and bombard cities. The life and death of nations are in their hands. But look a little deeper, and below this splendid tragedy we see the laughable farce. We see the webs of intrigue woven by crafty courtiers, the quarrels of ladies of the bed-chamber and pages of the backstairs, the passionate pursuit of the veriest baubles, the fits of jealousy, and the feverish outbursts of ambition. It is well that this other side of the picture should occasionally be revealed to us; so that we may not be beguiled into an adulation of power, or overtaken with the delusion that courts are exempt from the meaner passions of humanity.

Anne did not at once comply with her sister's demand; and an order was therefore transmitted by the Lord Chamberlain, enjoining the formidable Countess to remove from Whitehall. The order consummated the rupture between the two sisters. The Princess, wounded to the quick, hastened to withdraw from the palace, and after a brief sojourn at Sion Hill, took up her residence at Berkeley House. Can royal natures nourish such plebeian enmities?

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But the procedure of the Queen was not only undignified, it was unwise. Instead of effecting that separation of the Princess from her favourite which she desired, she did but strengthen their union by supplying the additional bonds of a common interest and a common mortification. Lady Marlborough, of course, offered to retire from the Princess's service, but Anne replied, as was probably expected, in the tenderest terms of expostulation, and asserted that she was not the cause of the quarrel which had taken place. "I really long to know," she says in one of her notes, "how my dear Mrs. Freeman got home; and now I have this opportunity of writing, she must give me leave to tell her, if she should ever be so cruel to leave her faithful Mrs. Morley, she will rob her of the joy of her life; for if that day should come, I should never enjoy another happy minute; and I swear to you I would shut myself up and never see a creature." After all, it cannot be denied that this warm and generous friendship elevates the character of Anne, and throws the lustre of romance about her insignificant person and her commonplace life. It was a friendship which gave all and received nothing. It was Anne who made sacrifices and endured insults. It was Anne who poured out all the affection of which she was

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capable with a measureless bounty. Meanwhile, her imperious "dictatress" accepted the gift as a tribute to her superiority, and went on her way, with her brilliant eyes and fascinating smile, more queenly than any queen.

Her courage and composure, however, were severely tested, when, on the 5th of May, Marlborough was suddenly arrested on a charge of high-treason, along with the Earl of Scarsdale, the Bishop of Rochester, and others. The public mind was much alarmed at this juncture by a threatened French invasion on behalf of the deposed monarch; and Marlborough, whose correspondence with James had long been suspected, was at once connected with it. But, in truth, his arrest was made upon information supplied by one Robert Torny, then imprisoned in Newgate for non-payment of a fine, who had drawn up an engagement in favour of James II., and forged to it the signatures of Marlborough, the Bishop of Rochester, and several noblemen and gentlemen. To strengthen his case, he forged several letters from Marlborough, and then, by means of a confederate, secreted the fictitious document in the Bishop of Rochester's palace at Bromley, in Kent. There, on information

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being given, it was found by the Government's agents; and its discovery was followed by a series of arrests.

The forgery was quickly detected and all whom it had implicated were immediately released, with the exception of Marlborough, who was detained in confinement till the last day of term. His name was also erased from the list of Privy Councillors. These harsh measures provoked a very general dissatisfaction; while they necessarily strengthened his influence with the Princess Anne, who regarded him as a martyr in her cause. But an unexpected event produced, at the close of 1694, a complete change in the situation. This was the death of Queen Mary. It involved William III. in no little difficulty; and many were found to declare that he had no longer any right to the crown and to argue that as Parliament had been summoned in the joint names of King and Queen, the latter's death dissolved it. No doubt, the circumstances were such that a party in favour of the Princess Anne might easily have been formed; but acting, as we may assume, on the advice of Marlborough, the Princess hastened to address a letter of condolence to the King, in which she wisely waived all pretensions to the throne, and declared her readiness to give every

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possible proof of respect for his person and zeal for his interest. The olive-branch was immediately accepted; an interview took place in which William received the Princess with great cordiality; and the palace of St. James was assigned as her future residence.

The reconciliation of William to the Princess was followed, as a matter of course, by his reconciliation to the Princess's principal friend and adviser. That he had grounds of complaint against Marlborough cannot be denied, even by those who, like ourselves, are not inclined to accept Macaulay's darkly-coloured estimate of the great General's character. For the chief modern argument against him is, that he was no better than his contemporaries; that, like them, in the prevailing uncertainty of English politics, and with the prospect of James II.'s return, he endeavoured to serve two masters, to propitiate the monarch *de jure,* while professing allegiance to the monarch *de facto.* Of a man like Marlborough the world is wont to expect that he shall be better than other men; that he shall surpass them not only as a warrior and a statesman, but excel them in all the heroic qualities. But to demand so much of one who had been bred up in the Court of Charles II., and had never had before

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him any example of the higher virtues, is surely unreasonable. Judged by the standard of his times, Marlborough was really a great man; and a careful examination of the charges brought against him by his enemies, and repeated with so much vehemence by Macaulay, not only demonstrates their groundlessness, or, at least, their exaggerated proportions, but really elevates the impartial critic's opinion of his public character.

The first indication of returning favour was Marlborough's appointment, in compliance with the Princess's wish, as governor of the young Duke of Gloucester, presumptive heir to the throne. William, having taken his resolution, acted upon it with kingly graciousness, saying, when he delivered the young Prince into his care, "Teach him to be like yourself, and he will not want accomplishments." He restored him also to his place in the Privy Council, to his military rank, and all his appointments. The reconciliation was complete; and thenceforward, to William's death, remained unbroken, the King's confidence in his distinguished subject increasing every year,—while Marlborough, on his part, finally broke with James II., and devoted all his great

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abilities to the defence of the Protestant Succession.

While Marlborough acted as the Prince's governor, the important duties of his tutor were discharged by the celebrated Bishop Burnet, the gossiping and versatile historian of his own times, a man of considerable acquirements and no small intellectual power. He devoted himself to his charge with great assiduity, and in a liberal spirit. "I took," he says, "to my own province, the reading and explaining the Scriptures to him, the instructing him in the principles of religion and the rules of virtue, and the giving him a view of history, geography, politics, and government." Under the supervision of two such accomplished guardians as the Earl and the Bishop, the young Prince progressed in a manner which excited the warmest hopes in the public mind; but his intellect was precocious, and the care bestowed upon its cultivation proved too great a strain for his feeble constitution. On the 24th of July, 1700, he attained his eleventh year, and on the following day was taken ill. The disease proved to be a malignant fever, against which his weak frame could make no resistance; and on the fourth day he died. The Earl at

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the time was at Althorpe, but hastened to Windsor on being apprised of the Prince's illness. He arrived just in time to receive the poor lad's dying breath.

From public events the Countess's attention was temporarily diverted by domestic incidents. Between Marlborough and Lord Godolphin a long and sincere friendship had existed; and therefore it was with no small satisfaction that he and the Countess consented to the marriage of their eldest daughter, Lady Henrietta Churchill, with Francis, Lord Godolphin's only son. Lady Henrietta surpassed even her mother in personal charms, while she had all her mother's vivacity, and a considerable share of her mother's impetuous temper. In later years a bitter feud broke out between them, and mother and daughter were never reconciled. The marriage, however, took place under the happiest auspices; the Princess presenting the beautiful bride with a dowry of £5000. It was followed, in January, 1700, by the marriage of the Earl's second daughter, Lady Anne, to Lord Spencer, afterwards Earl of Sunderland. Lady Anne, according to Horace Walpole, was the most beautiful of the four charming Churchills, as she was also the most amiable, and probably the cleverest. Her

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husband is described by Coxe as highly favoured by nature, and no less liberally gifted with intellectual endowments, which he had improved by assiduous study. He was distinguished by a sedateness above his years, and by a firmness of will which sometimes degenerated into obstinacy. His churlishness of speech was often pushed to the verge of rudeness; and his reserved character gave an appearance of coldness and even rudeness to his manners. At first the match was regarded with dissatisfaction by the Earl, but he gave way to the entreaties of his wife, and to the perseverance of the young couple. They lived happily together; and Lady Sunderland, as the "Little Whig," exercised in later years a great influence over the party to which her husband belonged. The third daughter, Lady Elizabeth, became the wife of the Earl of Bridgewater, and drew from Pope one of his most graceful compliments:—

> "Hence Beauty, waking, all her forms supplies,
> An angel's sweetness, or Bridgewater's eyes."

The fourth and youngest daughter, Lady Anne, was married in 1705 to John, Duke of Montagu. She figures in Pope's poems as the "Angel Duchess

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Montagu," and in the records of Society, as a woman of remarkable accomplishments and brilliant wit. Her temper was as wayward as her mother's, provoking from Marlborough the sarcastic observation, "I wonder you cannot agree, you are so alike!"

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II.

On the death of William III., March 8th, 1702, Anne succeeded to the throne, and Lady Marlborough to the influential position of friend and adviser to the reigning sovereign. Anne proceeded without delay to reward her and her husband for their loyal adherence to her cause, bestowing honours and emoluments with a lavish hand. The Earl received the Order of the Garter, and was nominated Captain-General of the English forces, at home and abroad, and master of the ordnance. The Countess was made groom of the stole, mistress of the robes, and entrusted with the control of the privy purse. The rangership of Windsor Park was also thrust into her full hands; and "the lodge" became her favourite residence. Her two elder daughters, Lady Harriet and Lady Spencer, became ladies of the bedchamber. At her intercession, the Earl of Sunderland obtained a renewal of his pension of £2000; and Marl-

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borough's exertions obtained for Lord Godolphin the post of lord high treasurer. Thus, in the court and the ministry, in the world of fashion, and the world of politics, the Marlborough influence was all powerful. The young ensign, whose *début* in public life was due to the favour of a royal mistress, had risen to be the most powerful man in England; while his wife, the daughter of a country squire, ruled supreme in the Queen's private councils.

The power of the Marlboroughs was increased and confirmed by the Earl's brilliant campaign in 1702, which developed his genius as a military commander, and cast a new and unaccustomed lustre on the English arms. The Queen desired to express her satisfaction by raising him to the rank of Duke; but Lady Marlborough objected on the ground that their fortune was not as yet adequate to the higher dignity. Mrs. Morley, however, overruled her dear Mrs. Freeman, meeting in some degree the objection on the score of income by granting the new Duke a pension of £5000 a year, secured on the Post Office revenue. This, however, the Commons declined to sanction; greatly to the regret of Anne, who wrote at once to the Duchess, expressing her anxiety to do something "towards making up what had been so maliciously

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hindered in Parliament. And, therefore," she adds, "I desire, my dear Mrs. Freeman and Mr. Freeman would be so kind as to accept of two thousand a year out of the Privy Purse besides the grant of the five. This can draw no envy, for nobody need know it." The Duchess, however, in a fit of disinterestedness, declined the royal bounty. We are sorry to add that at a later time, and in her period of disgrace at court, she demanded and received the old pension from the date of the Queen's munificent offer, that is, for the preceding nine years.

It would be impossible within our narrow limits to define the threads, ever so briefly, of the tangled web of political intrigue which makes up the history of the reign of Anne; and yet the Duchess of Marlborough was so busily employed in helping to weave it, that it is almost impossible to write her biography without borrowing the pen and intruding on the province of the historian. While the Duke was abroad, capturing fortified cities, achieving great victories over the finest armies of France, and crushing in the dust Louis the Fourteenth's schemes of European supremacy, the Duchess watched over his interests at home, and reported to him the movements of parties. Nothing was done in which

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she had not a share. That share was often injudicious; for her judgment was not equal to her ability, and her hot temper hurried her into speech and action that the Duke had often singular reason to regret. It was not that her views were unsound; on many subjects they were more liberal and sagacious than those of the leading politicians of the day; but she urged them with a vehemence which in itself was sufficient to provoke a spirit of opposition. In reference to the Bill for preventing Occasional Conformity, a severe penal measure aimed at the Dissenters, the Duchess's conduct is worth notice. This Bill affixed a heavy fine upon every person holding a public office, who attended a meeting of Dissenters not according to the liturgy of the Church of England, and incapacitated him from holding office until he had purged himself by a year's conformity to the Church. The Duchess wisely thought that an enactment of this character was calculated rather to injure the Church than to benefit it. Her Majesty's affection for the Church, in the Duchess's opinion, was beyond dispute; and for its better security she had chosen its most distinguished champions to be of her ministry and council. Nevertheless, she complains, in the very first new Parliament after her Majesty's

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accession, it was thought necessary with all diligence, to provide new strength, new support for this flourishing Church, as if it had been in the most tottering and declining condition. The Queen herself, in spite of Mrs. Freeman's arguments, favoured the Bill, which passed its third reading in the House of Commons by 223 against 140. In the Lords, while secretly using their influence against it, Marlborough and Godolphin, not yet prepared to break with the Tory party, gave their votes in its support. On the second reading, however, it was thrown out, much to the satisfaction of the people. But the Tories were sorely mortified by their defeat. It is surely to the credit of the Duchess that in these circumstances she rose superior to party feeling, and firmly espoused the cause of a wise toleration.

In the midst of their prosperity the Duke and Duchess experienced a blow of great severity, the death, from smallpox, of their son, John, Marquis of Blandford, a youth of whom the highest expectations had not unjustly been formed. Grainger describes him as uniting with the high spirit and frankness of his mother, his father's graciousness of address and suavity of disposition. His person was handsome;

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his mental gifts were far above the average; and a careful education had successfully developed them. The general evidence of his contemporaries confirms the eulogium which Congreve expressed in artificial verse:—

> "Wert thou not lovely, graceful, good, and young,
> The joy of sight, the talk of every tongue?
> Did ever branch so sweet a blossom bear,
> Or ever early fruit appear so fair?"

During his illness the Queen showed a sincere anxiety:—"I writ two words to my dear Mrs. Freeman," she says, addressing the Duchess, "and could not help telling her again that I am truly afflicted for the melancholy account that is come this morning of poor Lord Blandford. I pray God he may do well, and support you. And give me leave once more to beg you, for Christ Jesus' sake, to have a care of your dear precious self; and believe me, with all the passion imaginable, your poor, unfortunate, faithful Morley." Marlborough writes with more calmness, though the affliction was one which he felt very keenly:—"I am so troubled at the sad condition this poor child seems to be in, that I know not what I do. I pray God to give you some comfort in this great affliction. If you think anything under heaven can

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be done, pray let me know it, or if you think my coming can be of the least use, let me know it. I beg I may hear as soon as possible, for I have no thought but what is at Cambridge." . . . "I writ to you this morning," he adds, "and was in hopes I should have heard again before this time, for I hope the doctors were with you early this morning. If we must be so unhappy as to lose this poor child, I pray God to enable us both to behave ourselves with that resignation which we ought to do. If this uneasiness which I now lie under should last long, I think I could not live. For God's sake, if there be any hope of recovery, let me know it."

There was *no* hope of recovery, and within a few hours after writing this tender letter, the Duke started for Cambridge, where he arrived only in time to stand by his son's death-bed, on the morning of Saturday, February 20th, 1704.

The event sunk deep in the bereaved father's memory; and after the great victory of the Schellenberg, and in the midst of the delicate and masterly operations which preceded the greater victory of Blenheim, we find him writing to the Duchess in the following pathetic strain:—"July 13. Since my last I have had the happiness of receiving yours of the

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13th and 16th of last month, and am very sorry to see that you have had a return of the illness that I saw you have once at St. Albans. I conjure you not to neglect taking advice and doing what may be proper for preventing it in future; for if you will make me happy now, you must live long, and not have melancholy thoughts of what is passed; for I do assure you I place all my hopes in ending my days quietly with you, and to be contented with the children that it has pleased God to continue with us." In compliance with the Duchess's injunction, though much to his regret, the Duke destroyed all the letters he received from her, and we are unable, therefore, to discover in what way or to what extent she was afflicted by the loss of this cherished son. Probably she was wounded both in her ambition and her love. Notwithstanding the fire and force of her character, there must have been in it a vein of strong affection to have drawn from the calm and sincere Marlborough such effusions of passionate devotion. In reply to to one of her epistles, he writes like a young lover:— "If you had not positively desired that I would always burn your letters, I should have been very glad to have kept your dear letter of the 9th, it was so very kind, and particularly so upon the subject

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of our living quietly together, till which happy time comes, I am sure I cannot be contented; and then I do flatter myself I should live with as much satisfaction as I am capable of. I wish I could recall twenty years past, I do assure you, for no other reason but that I might in probability have longer time, and be the better able to convince you how truly sensible I am at this time of your kindness, which is the only real comfort of my life; and whilst you are kind, besides the many blessings it brings me, I cannot but hope we shall yet have a son, which are my daily prayers."

The Duke at this time was 54, and his wife 44. Neither years nor custom had weakened the love which the young Colonel Churchill had conceived for the beautiful Sarah Jennings. His concern for her health is touchingly expressed in a letter dated August 2nd:—

"I have received yours of the 23rd, which has given me, as you may easily believe, a good deal of trouble. I beg you will be so kind and just to me, as to believe the truth of my heart, that my greatest concern is for that of your own dear health. It was a great pleasure to me, when I thought we should be blessed with more children; but as all my happiness centres in

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living quietly with you, I do conjure you, by all the kindness which I have for you, which is as much as man ever had for woman, that you will take the best advice you can for your health, and then follow exactly what shall be prescribed for you; and I do hope that you will be so good as to let me have an exact account of it, and what the physicians' opinions are. If I were with you, I would endeavour to persuade you to think as little as possible of worldly business, and to be very regular in your diet, which I should hope would set you right in a very little time, for you have naturally a very good constitution. You and I have great reason to bless God for all we have, so that we must not repine at his taking our poor child from us, but bless and praise him for what his goodness leaves us; and I do beseech him, with all my heart and soul, that he would comfort and strengthen both you and me, not only to bear this, but any correction that he should think fit to lay on us. The use, I think, we should make of his correction is, that our chiefest time should be spent in reconciling ourselves to him, and having in our mind always that we may not have long to live in this world. I do not mean by this that we should live retired from the world, for I am persuaded that by

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living in the world, one may do much more good than by being out of it; but, at the same time, to live so as that one should cheerfully die when it shall be his pleasure to call for us. I am very sensible of my own frailties; but if I can ever be so happy as to live with you always, and that you comfort me and assist me in these my thoughts, I am then persuaded I I should be as happy and contented as it is possible to be in this world; for I know we should both agree, next to our duty to God, to do what we ought for the Queen's service."

It is impossible to doubt the simple piety of a man who could write like this. We do not play the Tartuffe to our own wives. And it is equally impossible to doubt that there must have been something noble in the Duchess of Marlborough to have won and secured the entire affection of such a man. The silly scandal which sometimes connects her name with Lord Godolphin, may be dismissed with contempt. So much of the heart and busy brain as Duchess Sarah could spare from her ambitious projects, her political schemes, and her warfare with the world, she gave to John, Duke of Marlborough, and to no other. In truth, her plans and projects all centred in his aggrandisement. She toiled and plotted

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in order that he might be great and powerful, believing, as we think she did, that his greatness and power were essential to the prosperity of England. She cared far more for political influence than did the Duke himself, whose mind travelled continually and eagerly from the field of battle, and the cabinets of princes, to a quiet English home, to be enjoyed by him in company with the queenly woman he loved and trusted.

It is perhaps true, as Earl Stanhope hints, that Marlborough, like another great chief, Belisarius, was no hero at home. "Not," says the historian, "that there were in the Duchess any moral frailties to forgive as there were in Antonina; but with a temper which Nature had made imperious, her animosities were fierce and her bursts of passion frequent. It would have been greatly to her own happiness had there been to curb them a husband's resolute will. We find Marlborough, on the contrary, as judged by his own letters, constantly suffer under them but never rebel. We find him almost sunk in despair until the Duchess herself relents." Granting that he carried the submissiveness of his affection too far, we may remember that his calm dignity would naturally shrink from the disgrace of domestic contention; and further that he may have been disposed to yield from his

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knowledge of his wife's many admirable qualities. The world has been accustomed to look upon Duchess Sarah as a termagant, a violent shrew; accepting without demur the accusations brought against her by her own enemies and the political enemies of her husband. We cannot deny that her temper was quick and violent; but she had nothing mean or shrewish in her. She was capable of fine impulses and generous sympathies; and her passionate outbursts sprang frequently from the impatience of a strong mind constrained to haggle with little minds about little things. And in the treatment which the Duke received from an ungracious Queen, an intriguing Court, and an ungrateful country, she had good cause for anger. Duchess Sarah was no perfect woman, no creature too bright and good for human nature's daily food; but a woman with a large heart, a big brain, and an imperious nature; a woman with many faults, which no careful education had ever done anything to correct. Take her for all in all, however, she seems to us to rise as superior to the women of fashion and the leaders of Society of her day as the Duke rose above all contemporary generals and statesmen.

We confess to an inability to understand the

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kindly sympathy which writers like Thackeray have expressed with the men of Queen Anne. It was an age of clever mediocrities in literature, art, and politics. With the exception of Swift and Dyer, and Addison and Steele—for Pope belongs to the Georgian period,—and of these only Swift and Dyer belong to the first rank, what eminent names can the world of letters show us? In politics, who can profess any enthusiasm for the cunning of Harley or the pretentiousness of Bolingbroke? We are aware that our confession will expose us to a good deal of adverse criticism. We shall be reminded of Earl Stanhope's dithyrambic outburst: "As the Ancients might boast of their Augustan age; as in England men point with pride to the age of Elizabeth, in Italy to the age of Leo the Tenth, and in France to the age of Louis the Fourteenth, so again among the English a halo has gathered round the age of Anne. Succeeding as she did a Dutch and to be succeeded by a German King, she holds in our literature an especial and an English place; and thus full many works of genius and renown, though they may have been commenced under William or continued under George, are taken by the world to be centred in her reign. Certainly it was an illustrious period,

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a period not easily paralleled elsewhere, that could combine the victories of Marlborough with the research of Newton — the statesmanship of Somers with the knight-errantry of Peterborough—the publication of Clarendon's History with the composition of Burnet's—the eloquence of Bolingbroke in Parliament and of Atterbury in the pulpit with the writings in prose and verse of Swift and Addison, of Pope and Prior."

This is a glowing statement; but it scarcely bears minute examination. Pope in no sense belongs to the Queen Anne period. We may allow it the lustre of the great name of Newton, though the 'Principia' was published in the reign of William III. Clarendon's History has no more to do with Queen Anne than Wordsworth's 'Excursion;' and Atterbury's eloquence would nowadays find as few admirers as Bolingbroke's. We grant the delicate humour and elegant English of Addison. We admit the ease and vivacity of Matthew Prior; but neither Addison nor Prior rose to the intellectual height of the kings of English literature. And what is specially noticeable in the Queen Anne literature is its low tone, its want of elevation of sentiment and nobility of purpose. In this respect it did but reflect

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the meanness of the politics and the *bourgeoisie* of the manners and customs of the age; but it is a signal and a fatal defect which cannot be extenuated. What can be said in defence of a society which could tolerate the libels of the *Examiner* or peruse with avidity the disgusting indecencies of the 'New Atalantis'?

Lord Stanhope is more successful, we think, when he claims for the reign of Anne a noble spirit of patriotism, and asserts that the people of England then set us a bright example. "I refer," he says, "to the constancy with which they encountered the ambition of Louis the Fourteenth, and bore without repining until that ambition was humbled the burthen and toil of the war in which they had engaged. At the outset they had no special call to arms. There was no immediate or imminent danger to themselves. Whatever danger to themselves might arise from their too powerful neighbour would be guarded against or be turned aside by a strictly maritime system. But the people of England at that time felt the duty that they owed as a member of the great European family. It was not enough for them to stand free in their insular security if the yoke of France were to weigh on Holland and Germany,

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on Italy and Spain. 'Therefore they courageously braved the risk and peril, the cost of money and the cost of men, which a continental war implied; and while the Dutch and the Germans especially shrunk in many cases from their first contingents, England in truth sustained the main brunt of the conflict that ensued. It was this spirit that nerved the arm of Marlborough and gave effect to the statesmanship of Somers." But Lord Stanhope forgets that the men whom he glorifies as the wits and friends of the wits of Queen Anne's reign were bitterly opposed to the French war, necessary as it was to the European peace and security. It was Marlborough who for seven arduous years inspired the courage and maintained the confidence of England. It was for this great end that his Duchess held her ground by the side of the Queen, confronting every enemy, baffling every intrigue, and infusing something of her own energy and decision into the councils of Ministers. And what was their reward? A storm of lampoons and libel, of pamphlets in prose and pasquinades in verse, from the Grub Street ballad, hawked about at the doors of the coffee-houses, to the elaborate 'Histoire Secrète de la Reine Zarah et les Zarasiens,' from the scurrilous anonymous print

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to the envenomed articles of the *Examiner*. Never was patriotism at a lower ebb, and never was party feeling more vehement, than in the latter years of the reign of Anne.

Lord Stanhope remarks on the fact that Marlborough was keenly affected by these libels, above which, he thinks, a man so serene and so self-possessed might have tranquilly risen. We find him, in his letters to the Duchess, declaring that he is in the power of the Ministers, "especially," he adds, "by the villanous way of printing, which stabs me to the heart." But surely it is not difficult to understand that a man, conscious of the loyal discharge of duties of the greatest delicacy, with the constant pressure upon him of the conduct of an immense war, and of difficult and complicated negotiations—a man, moreover, of singularly kindly nature and intense sympathies,—should have been sorely hurt by the gross and unscrupulous misrepresentations to which he was exposed. The Duchess was of a different temperament. She loved to ride on the whirlwind, and took a keen delight in the stress of the storm. Entirely fearless, and gifted with great animal spirits, she laughed at the attacks made upon her, and did not hesitate to meet her assailants with their own weapons.

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But this was an ignoble warfare, in which the great soul of Marlborough could not condescend to engage.

We come now to the fall of the Duchess, involving the disgrace of the hero of Blenheim and Ramillies, from her position of almost sovereign power. To understand how it was effected a brief sketch of political events is absolutely necessary. We aim only at refreshing the reader's memory. For fuller information he will turn to the pages of Coxe, Grainger, and Somerville; or, better still, to those of Earl Stanhope.

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III.

We have seen that the Duke of Marlborough was intrusted by Queen Anne with the complete direction of the war. In some respects he was fortunately situated for carrying out a trust so important, and a work so arduous, with the vigour that ensures success. The Duchess's influence over Queen Anne, secured him the support of the Crown, at that time a factor not to be neglected in English politics. He obtained control over home affairs by the appointment of his friend, and his daughter's father-in-law, Lord Godolphin, to the post of Lord Treasurer. As a Tory, he had on his side the weight of the Tory party; while the opposition of the Whigs was disarmed by the fact that the war was a Whig war, undertaken by William III. and his Whig advisers. It was popular with the country, which retained the old traditional jealousy of France, and had long fretted at its loss of influence in European councils, through the

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inglorious policy of the Stuart sovereigns. On the continent, however, Marlborough's difficulties were very serious. At the Hague he was hampered by the petty rivalries and narrow statecraft of the Dutch ministers; and for awhile the German Powers withheld their co-operation. But his address and consummate political skill overcame every obstacle. He received the command of the Dutch as well as the English forces; reconciled the German princes, and cemented an alliance, of which he was universally acknowledged as heart and brain. Only a serene and comprehensive intellect, however, would have dealt with the various labours which were thus imposed upon him. While compelled to watch and guide the political movements at home, and to compose the disssenions of the English cabinet, he was called upon to manage the negotiations of the Allies, and plan the operations of every campaign. For ten years he was virtually supreme in Europe. Portugal, and Savoy, the Calvinists of the Cevennes, the Protestants of Hungary, the troubles of the Emperor of Germany, the jealousy of the King of Prussia, the arrogance of Charles XII. of Sweden—all, everything recognized the control of Marlborough. "Over the confederacy," said his enemy, Bolingbroke, "he, a

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new, a private man, acquired by merit and management, a more decided influence than high birth, confirmed authority, and even the crown of Great Britain had given to William III." And this, too, though when he took the command in Flanders he was fifty-two years of age, and had never before held any independent military authority. Yet such was the skill of his combinations, such the mingled boldness and prudence of his strategy, that, as Voltaire epigrammatically says, he never fought a battle which he did not win, nor besieged a fortress which he did not take.

In the campaign of 1704 his military genius asserted itself with a boldness which astonished Europe. The armies of France and Bavaria were directed against Vienna, beneath the walls of which Louis XIV. hoped to win a victory, that would compel the Emperor to make peace. Marlborough saw the design, and hastened to baffle it. With equal rapidity and secrecy, he transferred the allied army from Flanders to the Danube, and crossing the Danube and the Lech, struck into the heart of Bavaria. The forces of France and Bavaria were compelled to turn aside to meet him, and near the village of Blenheim underwent a signal discomfiture, which broke the spell

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of French invincibility. In 1706, he won the battle of Ramillies, which ensured the deliverance of Flanders, and retook the line of fortresses which the French had occupied. Meanwhile, politics in England had undergone a change. The Tory party, relieved from all dread of French supremacy, began to talk of peace, though half the objects of the war were not attained. Marlborough exercised all his influence to keep the Government united, and to preserve that alliance between the Tories and Whigs which he had cemented at the beginning of Queen Anne's reign. For the ultra-Tories he substituted Robert Harley as Secretary of State, and Henry St. John (afterwards Lord Bolingbroke) as Secretary at War. Soon afterwards, to retain the support of the Whigs, he introduced the Whig leader, Lord Sunderland, into the Ministry, much against the will of the Queen, who was at heart a Tory of the Tories. But as the Tory opposition to the war increased, he was driven to seek more earnestly that help which only the Whigs could give; and in 1708 he extorted from Queen Anne her consent to the dismissal of Harley and St. John, and their replacement by Lord Somers and Wharton. Her resentment was deep; but for a time it was conquered by her grief for the death of her

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husband, Prince George (October 28, 1708). The Duchess of Marlborough, as mistress of the robes, was present when he died; and attended upon her royal mistress with much assiduity in her first burst of passionate sorrow. The widowed Queen's heart was softened towards her old friend and favourite, and she forgot for awhile her anger at the Duchess's opposition to her political views. Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Freeman once more exchanged confidences; but the reconciliation did not last very long. The Duchess had supported her husband with characteristic vehemence; and the Queen neither forgot nor forgave her outbreaks of temper.

The victory of Oudenarde and the capture of Lille in 1708 drew from the French King an offer of terms of peace, which conceded all that the Allies had sought to obtain. Marlborough strongly pressed their acceptance upon the English Ministry; but, to his great chagrin, they insisted that Louis should, with his own army, compel his grandson, Philip of Anjou, to resign the crown of Spain. This last stipulation roused the pride of Louis and the indignation of his subjects. The war was renewed; and though the victory of Malplaquet in 1709 added to Marlborough's military glory, it showed how well the French soldiers

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had learned to fight. The slaughter which attended it, furnished the Tory leaders with a ground of attack upon Marlborough. He was accused, most unjustly, of prolonging the war to serve his own selfish purposes. In the *Examiner*, and in the libels and pasquinades which Swift and Prior, and St. John and a host of inferior writers, issued without stint, he was charged with almost every vice that could disgrace humanity. The English public is prone to sudden revulsions of opinion; and the hero whom they had cheered with so much enthusiasm, they were now prepared to hoot. At this juncture, a High Church clergyman, Dr. Sacheverell, a man of no great parts but of consummate audacity, preached a sermon at St. Paul's (Nov. 5, 1709) against the principles of the Revolution, openly defending the doctrine of non-resistance. Sunderland resolved on his impeachment, against the more prudent advice of Marlborough and Somers. The trial grew into a great party struggle, in which the ignorant crowd espoused the cause of Sacheverell. He was found guilty, but only by a slight majority; and it was evident that the triumph of Toryism was close at hand.

We turn to the part which, in those later events,

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was played by the Duchess of Marlborough. We have seen that her influence over the Queen was supreme; but like most strong minds she felt a contempt for weak ones, and this contempt she unwisely allowed Anne to perceive. Habit was a powerful bond between them; but as the Duchess gave way more and more to her imperious disposition, and endeavoured to support the Duke's political schemes by outbursts of temper, in which she not only forgot the respect due to the sovereign, but the sympathy due to the woman, that bond was gradually weakened. Harley's quick eye detected the Queen's growing weariness of her masterful adviser; but he knew that she could not do without some friend or favourite to lean upon, and looking around for a suitable person, he chanced upon a kinswoman of the Duchess, one Abigail Hill, whom the Duchess herself had introduced into the royal household. This soft-voiced, mild-mannered woman had already won the Queen's confidence to a considerable degree by her apparent humility and gratitude, her ready concurrence with her views, and her condolences when she was suffering from her frequent contentions with the formidable Duchess.

The struggle which ensued between the Duchess

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and the lady-dresser might be regarded as high comedy, but for the serious issues that depended upon it. Had it not ended in the overthrow of the Duchess, England might have been spared that Treaty of Utrecht which settled nothing, and gave her no compensation for her loss of blood and treasure in a protracted war. For if Anne had stood firm by the side of Marlborough, it may be assumed that he would have never been forced to rely solely upon the support of the Whigs; and his experiment of governing the country without regard to party might have proved successful. At first the Duchess seems to have had no mistrust of the designs of her kinswoman. Conscious of the favours she had lavished upon her, she relied upon her fidelity; and perhaps, too, she was over-confident of her influence with her royal mistress. But afterwards she remembered that, had she been less unsuspicious and more on her guard, there were symptoms that would have opened her eyes. "She had a shy, reserved behaviour towards me," writes the Duchess, "always avoided entering into free conversation with me, and made excuses when I wanted her to go abroad with me." But what the Duchess mistook for "ill-breeding or surly honesty" proved to be "a design deeply laid, as she had

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always the artifice to hide very carefully the power which she had over the Queen." Surely there is something very mean and pitiful in Anne's plotting with this low-bred woman against the general and statesman who was throwing so much glory over her reign, and who, whatever his faults, had never swerved in his loyalty to her interests. For she was aiming at the Duke through the Duchess; and even as regards the latter, we must not forget, in our acknowledgment of her excesses of temper, her long fidelity to her royal mistress, and the sagacity of her counsels. The Duchess Sarah, condemn her as we may, was a better confidante for a queen than Abigail Hill.

It was in the summer of 1707, when the victory of Ramillies had revived the declining power of Marlborough, and temporarily restored the amicable and confidential relations between the Queen and her adviser, that the latter became aware of her kinswoman's treachery. A rumour then reached her of Abigail's marriage with a gentleman named Masham, who also owed his place in the royal household to the Duchess's favour. Mrs. Masham did not deny the truth of the report, and asked pardon for the concealment she had practised. This pardon was readily accorded, and

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the good-natured Duchess, thoroughly mollified, offered to acquaint the Queen with the affair, and obtain her forgiveness. To her astonishment, the lady-dresser replied that the Queen knew all about it. Straight to the royal presence went the mistress of the robes, not unnaturally offended at the deception practised upon her. "I said," writes the Duchess, "that I thought she herself ought to have told me of it; but the only thing I was concerned at was, that this plainly showed a change in her Majesty towards me, as I had once before observed to her, when she was pleased to say, that it was not she that was changed but me; and that if I was the same to her, she was sure she was so to me." She added, "I believe I have spoken to her (Mrs. Masham) a hundred times to tell you of it, and she would not . . ." a statement which, we may be sure, greatly startled the Duchess. Inquiries soon revealed to her the unpleasant fact that the fabric of her influence had been secretly undermined; and the still more unpleasant fact that Mrs. Masham was but the instrument of the dexterous and ambitious Harley. She made known her convictions to Godolphin and Marlborough, neither of whom at first seems to have felt much interest in the matter. Probably they thought of it as only a "woman's

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quarrel;" and the Duke, indeed, administered to his wife an unusually stern reproof, desiring her "to put an end to these controversies, and to avoid all occasions of suspicion and disgust, and not to suffer herself to grow insolent upon the favour of fortune; otherwise," said he, "I shall hardly be able hereafter to excuse your fault, or to justify my own actions, however meritorious." But the course of events soon demonstrated that the seeming bedchamber-intrigue was a subtle conspiracy against his honour and dignity, involving, moreover, the highest interests of the country.

The correspondence which followed, the interviews between the Queen and the Duchess, the recriminations between the Duchess and Mrs. Masham, the manœuvres and counter-manœuvres of Whig and Tory statesmen, dignified by the occasional intervention of the great Duke himself, form one of the most extraordinary chapters in the history of Courts. It has been so often written that it were waste of space to write it anew. The Duchess, daily subjected to fresh vexations and insults, grew more and more irritable, until she lost all control over a temper never under very strict regimen. So that while we cannot excuse the Queen's ungracious and ungrateful conduct, we can

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understand the feeling which made her incline towards the quiet and soft-voiced Masham, when the stern Duchess, with fire in her eyes and a frown on her brow, indignant at the slights put upon herself, but vastly more indignant at the obstructions thrown in the way of the Duke, swept through the galleries of St. James's in a storm of passion. It is said that, on one occasion, she closed the door of the closet in which she and the Queen had waged one of their wordy battles, with so much violence, that the noise echoed through the whole apartment.

The last interview, in which the Queen exhibited any traces of her old affection, took place during the Christmas holidays, and is thus described by the Duchess :—

"The moment I saw her Majesty, I plainly perceived she was uneasy. She stood all the while I was with her, and looked as coldly on me as if her intention was that I should no longer doubt of my loss of her affections. Upon observing what reception I had, I said, 'I was sorry I had happened to come so unseasonably.' I was making my courtsey to go away, when the Queen, with a great deal of disorder in her face, and without speaking one word, took me by the hand; and when, therefore, I stooped to kiss

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hers, she took me up with a very cold embrace, and then, without one kind word, let me go. So strange a treatment of me, after very long and faithful services, and after such repeated assurances from her Majesty of an unalterable affection, made me think that I ought, in justice to myself, as well as in regard to my mistress's interest, to write to her in the plainest and sincerest manner possible, and expostulate with her upon her change to me, and upon the new counsels by which she seemed to be wholly governed."

This extraordinary document is too long to be quoted *in extenso;* but it throws so vivid a light on the character of its writer that we must invite the reader's attention to a few of its more striking passages.

She begins by requesting the Queen to read her "history," and assures her she will then know that she has mentioned nothing but the truth. "I must desire," she continues, "that you will be pleased to do this before you receive the Holy Sacrament," because "everybody considers that as the most serious and important thing they have to do in the world; and in order to prepare themselves for it in such a manner as the greatness of the mystery requires, they are

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directed to take a strict account of their lives, and to be sorry for any wrong thing they have done, and to resolve never more to do the same; and I know your Majesty on that occasion always observes the great rule of examining yourself, and justly considering what a sacred work you are going about, constantly makes use of that opportunity to search and try your wayes and take a solemn view of your actions."

After this singular exordium, she quotes certain rules of conduct from 'The Whole Duty of Man,' which she proceeds to apply to her sovereign with unhesitating frankness.

"Upon the first," she says, "I would beg your Majesty to ask your own heart seriously whether you have ever told me of any fault but that of believing, as all the world does, that you have an intimacy with Mrs. Masham; and whether these shocking things you complain I have said, were any more than desiring you to love me better than her, and not to take away your confidence from me after more than twenty-five years' service and professions of friendship.

"Upon the second, whether you have not forsaken my friendship upon slight or no faults?

"Upon the third, whether you have ever taken

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well any kind advice that I have endeavoured to give you, but have been always angry at me for it?

"Upon the fourth, whether you have attempted ever, by the least kind word, to make me any amends upon all the just representations I have made of the wrong done me in the business of my office, in Mrs. Masham's using my lodgings, and all that you have said upon those occasions?"

Was ever Queen before so rigorously catechised?

After some further words of exhortation, the Duchess continues:—

"In the warning before the Communion, in the Common Prayer Book, we are enjoined so to search and examine our consciences that we may come holy and cleane to such a heavenly feast, and to reconcile ourselves, and to make restitution to those that we have done the least injury to; and if we have given any reall cause of complaint, to acknowledge our fault, in order to regain the friendship of those we have used ill, and not to think it a disparagement to speak first, since 'tis no more than our duty; and I have read somewhere, that God himself does not forgive the injuries that are done to us, till we are satisfied and intercede for those that did them, who are afterwards obliged to make suitable returns by all offices

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of Christian love and friendship. The Scripture itself does explain this matter in these words:—First be reconciled to thy brother, and then offer thy gift. The meaning can be no other but that if at any time we are going to receive, and remember that we have used any one ill, we should first endeavour to make satisfaction, it being but reasonable and just that whoever has done wrong should confess and acknowledge it, and to the utmost of his power make reparation for it."

To enforce this wholesome teaching, which shows that Duchess Sarah had profited by her intercourse with Tillotson, she quotes a passage from Jeremy Taylor's 'Holy Living,' a book very popular in those days as a manual of devotion, and still highly prized by all who can value high and beautiful thoughts expressed in language of rare eloquence, and continues:—

"If anything I have written now, or at any time, appears to bee too familiar from a subject to a sovereign, I hope your Majesty will think it less wrong, if you consider its coming from Mrs. Freeman to Mrs. Morley, which names you so long obliged me to use that it is not easy for me now quite to forget them; and I still hope I have a better character in

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the world than Mrs. Masham tells your Majesty of inveteracy and malice, as I mentioned before, for I do not comprehend that one can be properly said to have malice or inveteracy for a viper, because one endeavours to hinder it from doing mischief; for I think when I know there is such an one, and do not acquaint you with it, I should fail in my duty, and I can't see how that can be called being malicious. But since you make so ill returns for all the information which I have given you, which I know to be right from the dear-bought experience of that ungrateful woman, I will never mention her more, after I have had what I desire at the beginning of this, that you will say upon your word and honour that you have read these papers in the manner desired, and that you are not changed, though I wish you may not repent it, and alter your opinion of this wretch, as you did of Mr. Harley, when it is too late."

That this remarkable letter was written in all earnestness and sincerity cannot be doubted; nor should its transition from catechetical gravity and devout seriousness to a sudden shrillness of objurgation against Mrs. Masham blind us to the fact that, in writing it, the Duchess had good reasons for expressing her feelings strongly. She had been a faithful,

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if too importunate and imperious, friend to the Queen, in the days before her succession to the throne was placed beyond question; and her husband, the Duke, had rendered signal services in many difficult conjunctures, apart from his wisdom in the cabinet and his success in the battle-field. It may be said that these services had been liberally rewarded; but not, we think, beyond what they deserved. For, indeed, the honours and estates conferred upon Marlborough cannot be compared with those bestowed upon Wellington, who had certainly no greater difficulties to contend with, and accomplished no more splendid results. We may pardon the Duchess, therefore, the indignation with which she saw the advancement of a woman in every respect her inferior, who had no claims upon the favour or friendship of the Queen, whose fortune was due to her own kindness, and who was obviously a puppet in the hands of her illustrious husband's most unscrupulous opponents. If in such circumstances a temper naturally quick became overcharged with irritability, if she found it more and more difficult to exercise her self-control, if her sharp wit degenerated into bitterness, who shall wonder, and what candid student of human character will not judge with leniency?

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If the Duchess had hoped that her hortatory letter would lead the way to a reconciliation, she was entirely mistaken. The breach widened daily; and during the Sacheverell trial fresh causes of offence were given—and taken—on both sides. Let us quote the Duchess's curiously naïve account :—

"This was at Dr. Sacheverell's trial, where I waited upon the Queen the first time she went thither, and having stood above two hours, said to the vice-chamberlain, that when the Queen went to any place incognito (as she came to the trial, and only looked from behind a curtain), it was always the custom for the ladies to sit down before her; but her Majesty had forgot to speak to us now; and that since the trial was like to continue very long every day, I wished he would put the Queen in mind of it: to which he replied very naturally, 'Why, madam, should you not speak to the Queen yourself, who are always in waiting?'

"This I knew was right, and therefore I went up to the Queen, and stooping down to her as she was sitting, to whisper to her, said, 'I believed her Majesty had forgot to order us to sit, as was customary in such cases.' Upon this, she looked indeed as if she had forgot, and was sorry for it, and answered in a very

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kind easy way, 'By all means, pray sit;' and, before I could go a step from her chair, she called to Mr. Mordaunt, the page of honour, to bring stools, and desire the ladies to sit down, which accordingly we did—Lady Scarborough, Lady Burlington, and myself. But as I was to sit nearest to the Queen, I took care to place myself at a good distance from her, though it was usual in such cases to sit close to her, and sometimes at the basset table, where she does not appear incognito; but, in a place of ceremony, the company has sat so near her as scarce to leave her room to put her hand to her pocket. Besides this, I used a further caution, of showing her all the respect I could in this matter, by drawing a curtain behind me in such a manner, betwixt her and me, as to appear to be as it were in a different room from her Majesty. But my Lady Hyde,* who stood behind the Queen when I went to speak to her (and who I observed, with an air of boldness more than good breeding, came up then nearer to hear what I said), continued to stand still in the same manner, and never came to sit with the rest of us that day, which I then took for nothing else but the mak-

* Lady Hyde was afterwards Countess of Rochester, and belonged to the anti-Marlborough faction.

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ing show of more than ordinary favour with the Queen.

"The next day the Duchess of Somerset * came to the trial, and before I sat down I turned to her, having always used to show her a good deal of respect, and asked her if her Grace would not be pleased to sit; at which she gave a sort of start back, with the appearance of being surprised, as if she thought I had asked a very strange thing, and refused sitting. Upon this I said it was always the custom to sit before the Queen in such cases, and that her Majesty had ordered us to do so the day before, but that her refusing it now looked as if she thought we had done something that was not proper. To which she only answered, that she did not care to sit; and then she went and stood behind the Queen, as Lady Hyde had done the day before, which I took no farther notice of then, but sat down with my Lady Burlington as we did before. But when I came to reflect upon what these two ladies had done, I plainly perceived that, in the Duchess of Somerset especially, this conduct could not be thought to be the effect of humility, but that it must be a stratagem that they

* Wife of the "proud" Duke of Somerset, and as a Percy, treated with considerable deference by the Court.

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had formed in their cabal, to flatter the Queen by paying her more respect, and to make some public noise of this matter that might be to my disadvantage, or disagreeable to me.

"And this I was still the more confirmed in, because it had been known before that the Duchess of Somerset, who was then with her lord, was to act a cunning part between the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. The Whigs and Tories did not intend to come to the trial.

"As, therefore, it was my business to keep all things as quiet as possible till the campaign was over, and preserve myself, in the meanwhile, if I could, from any public affront, I resolved to do what I could to disappoint these ladies in their little design; and in order to this, I waited upon the Queen the next morning, before she went to the trial, and told her that I had observed, the day before, that the Duchess of Somerset had refused to sit at the trial, which I did not know the meaning of, since her Majesty was pleased to order it, and it was nothing more than what was agreeable to the constant practice of the Court in all such cases; but however, if it would be in any respect more pleasing to her Majesty that we should stand for the future, I begged she would let me know

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her mind about it, because I should be very sorry to do anything that could give her the least dissatisfaction. To this she answered, with more peevishness than was natural to her, in these words: '*If I had not liked you should sit, why should I have ordered it?*'

"This plainly showed that the cabal had been blowing me up, but that she could not, however, contradict her own order. What she had now said was still a further confirmation of it, and made it more difficult for the cabal to proceed any farther in this matter, and therefore the next day the Duchess of Ormond and Lady Fletcher came to the trial, and, to my great surprise, sat down amongst the rest of us. And thus this matter ended; only that the Duchess of Somerset used some little arts afterwards, which are not worth mentioning, to sweeten me again, and cover her design, which I suppose now she was ashamed of."

We have here another of those glimpses of the inner life of Courts which shows what trivial causes act as the springs of great events. The fate of nations, the settlement of the balance of power in Europe, the ultimate issues of "glorious victories" and intricate negotiations,

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were all mixed up with, and made to depend upon, the squabbles of ladies-in-waiting respecting points of etiquette. It is not an edifying picture; and we turn from it gladly.

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IV.

THE fall of Marlborough having been resolved upon, Anne and her secret advisers lost no time in bringing it about. Their first idea seems to have been, so to wound his sense of dignity and publicly offend him, as to compel his resignation. A vacancy occurring in the command of a regiment, the Queen wrote to the Duke requesting that the colonelcy should be conferred upon Mr. John Hill, whose only recommendation was that his sister was Mrs. Masham. Like all the Hills, he had been pushed forward by the Duchess, who speaks of him as "a tall boy, whom I clothed (for he was all in rags) and put to school at St. Albans." At her request the Duke, though declaring that he was "good for nothing," had made him Groom of the Bedchamber to the Duke of Gloucester, and, afterwards, his Aide-de-camp. His promotion over the heads of elder and more competent officers would, as the Duke saw, be regarded by the

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Army with disgust; and obtaining an audience of the Queen, he urged this fact upon her consideration. He added that he should regard it as a personal mortification, and a sign of his loss of the royal confidence, if compelled to bestow that or any other favour on a brother of Mrs. Masham. The Queen, however, listened to his representations very coldly; and adhering to her request, she closed the interview by saying, "You will do well to advise with your friends."

Keenly resenting so deliberate an insult, the Duke, accompanied by the Duchess, retired to Windsor Lodge, omitting the usual ceremony of taking leave, and choosing the very day on which a Cabinet Council was to be held. He left a letter in draft for the consideration of his colleagues, in which he announced to the Queen his settled intention of resigning unless Mrs. Masham were removed, and requested her Majesty to decide once for all between her and him. Godolphin, however, hesitated on the adoption of so bold a course, and with some of his Whig friends urged Marlborough to modify his letter and withdraw his alternative. Eventually he yielded, and, at the same time, the Queen, alarmed by some hostile votes in the House of Commons, showed a more pliant disposition. A compromise was effected. Anne wrote

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to the Duke that he might dispose of the regiment as he thought fit, and ordered him to return to Court, assuring him that he had no ground for suspicion of change in her Majesty's good intentions. On the other hand, Mrs. Masham was allowed to remain, and Jack Hill was solaced with a pension of £1000 a year.

It is to be regretted that the Duke, on this occasion, did not abide by his decision, and compel his enemies to "show their hand." He was still strong enough to have defeated their intrigues, and his popularity and influence both in Parliament and the country would have constrained the Queen to dismiss Mrs. Masham. It is no doubt a bad thing for a sovereign to be governed by favourites; but it is worse when she is governed by favourites who are the tools of others. In her submission to the strong intellect and lofty character of the Duchess of Marlborough, there was at least something decorous and respectable; but her subserviency to Mrs. Masham degraded royalty itself. The former was a competent and an able adviser; the latter could give no counsel that was worth acceptance. It is probable she never ventured on an independent opinion; and that when she spoke it was as the mouth-piece of Harley.

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That the Duke should cling to his position as commander-in-chief, and desire to bring to an end the war which he had conducted with such brilliant ability, was not unnatural; but by withdrawing his resignation, he gave his enemies time to prepare for his ignominious dismissal. The Queen used all her personal influence to gain over his associates and supporters; while Harley and St. John set their satirists and pamphleteers to work to poison the public mind against him by the most injurious misrepresentations. Nor did they hesitate to weaken his hands abroad. At length, they felt sufficiently strong to dismiss Godolphin from the Lord Treasurership, and appoint Harley himself to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.

This great blow was quickly followed up by the dismissal of all the Whig ministers, who were replaced by Tories. "Thus," says Earl Stanhope, "fell the great Whig administration of Queen Anne. Considering its high fame in history, it is remarkable for how short a period it endured. The changes in Godolphin's government, bringing it round from Tory to Whig, took place by slow degrees; but the latter party can scarcely be thought to have gained an entire ascendancy until the resignation of Harley in the spring of 1708. According, then, to this computation the

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Whigs were dominant for a period of but two years and a half. So far as regards the great battles of this war, the two parties, looking only to their tenure of power, are entitled to divide the credit between them. The Tories held office during Blenheim and Ramillies; the Whigs held office during Oudenarde and Malplaquet. But as regards the policy which led to those successes the praise, as I conceive, belongs almost wholly to the Whigs. It was that war policy aimed at the ambition of Louis the Fourteenth which King William had pursued with more spirit than success—that policy which Somers and Somers' friends had consistently maintained—that policy brought at last to a triumphant issue by the genius of Marlborough and Eugene."

The general election which followed proved favourable to the Tory party, and Marlborough's fall could no longer be delayed. It was probably hastened by the restlessness and ill temper of the Duchess, which rendered impossible any reconciliation between him and his old friends, the Tories, while it strengthened the Queen's resentment. In the spring of 1711 the Duchess was summarily removed from all her offices. She felt this humiliation greatly, and made several efforts to

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avert the royal displeasure. For this purpose the Duke had an audience with the Queen on the 17th of January, at which he presented a letter from his consort very humbly written. Anne, after reading it, coldly replied: "I cannot change my resolution." Marlborough then entreated that the Duchess might still retain her offices, or that at the least a longer interval of time should be allowed her. He flung himself upon his knees in the earnestness of his efforts to avoid the disgrace of the wife he so tenderly loved. But the Queen was inflexible, and desired that the Gold Key should be sent back to her within two days.

Marlborough rose from his knees, and recovering his composure, proceeded to refer to a personal business. The Queen, however, with scant courtesy, refused to hear him, exclaiming, "I will talk of nothing till I have the key." Depressed, and grievously wounded, the hero of Blenheim and Ramillies took his leave. He had next to encounter his consort's indignation. The haughty Sarah, taking the key from her side, threw it (so says Lord Dartmouth) into the middle of the room, bidding him take it up, and carry it to whom he pleased. That same evening Marlborough returned it into the Queen's own hands. Giving way to the violence of her temper, the Duchess

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sent in to the Queen a demand for the money she would have received during the last nine years, had she accepted the royal offer of an additional premium from the Privy Purse. This was conceded. Still dissatisfied, on being ordered to relinquish her apartments at St. James's Palace, she made her servants tear down and carry away the brass locks from the doors and the marble chimney-pieces from the walls; and desisted only at the express injunction of Marlborough himself. In fact, the Duchess's conduct at this period cannot be defended or excused. It was that of a woman who, in the vehemence of her anger and the fury of her disappointment, forgot her own and her husband's dignity.

At the close of 1711 the Duke was dismissed from all his employments, and Harley and St. John were, for a brief period, triumphant. These grave matters, belong, however, to the province of the historian. Having reason to apprehend some design on the part of his enemies Marlborough and the Duchess retired to the Continent, where the great General was everywhere received with the honours due to his illustrious services. On the accession of George I. to the English throne, he returned to England and proceeded to

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London, entering it attended by two hundred gentlemen on horseback, and the city volunteers, amid the approving shouts of the people. On the following day he was sworn of the Privy Council, and once more appearing in the House of Lords, took the oaths of allegiance. At his consort's advice he declined to accept any official appointment. "I said," remarks the Duchess, "everybody that liked the Revolution and the security of the law, had a great esteem for him, that he had a greater fortune than he wanted, and that a man who had had such success, with such an estate, would be of more use to any Court than they could be to him; that I would live civilly with them, if they were so to me, but would never put it into the power of any king to use me ill. He was entirely of this opinion, and determined to quit all, and serve them only when he could act honestly and do his country service at the same time." George I. restored him to his post as captain-general of the land forces, and made him colonel of the first regiment of foot-guards, and master-general of the ordnance. But his public life was virtually ended, and at Holywell House near St. Albans, he resided with his still handsome consort, enjoying that "domestic quiet" he had always desiderated, and gathering around him a brilliant circle of children and grand-children.

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"It was not at this period," says Mrs. Thomson, "that the broken health and weakened mind of Marlborough cast a gloom over that circle of young and old, of which he was the life and centre. For some years after the accession of George the First, Marlborough continued to be a healthy and an active man; riding on horseback or driving about, and delighting, when he was at Blenheim, in walking about the grounds, inspecting those beautiful ornate scenes which his taste and wealth had caused to flourish around him. In the evening he received his friends without ceremony, and joined in the games of ombre, basset, and picquet, or of whist, his favourite game; and the illustrious and amiable Marlborough often descended to a post of command with his grandchildren." *

In March 1714 he was deeply wounded by the death of his third daughter, Elizabeth Countess of Bridgewater, in the 26th year of her age. This severe shock was followed in less than two years by one still more severe; the death, from pleurisy, of his second daughter, the gracious and beautiful Countess of Sunderland (April 18, 1716). Six weeks afterwards,

* Mrs. Thomson here follows Coxe, almost word for word.

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while secluded in his grief at Holywell House, he was seized with a paralytic attack, which deprived him of speech and consciousness. He recovered sufficiently to visit Bath, and then Blenheim, accompanied by his wife, but on the 10th November he was a second time stricken. Again, however, he recovered much of his usual energy, and though sensibly weakened was able to attend in his place in parliament, and perform the duties of his high military posts with his usual regularity. His last years, however, were vexed by his consort's incessant disputes with friends and foes, politicians and pamphleteers, fine ladies and hired wits. She became the Ishmael of society; attacking everybody and the object of everybody's attack. She poured out the vials of wrath on Sunderland, Cadogan, Mr. Secretary Craggs, and Vanbrugh, the dramatist and architect, who was constructing the massive pile of Blenheim. Yet her pride in and her attachment to her illustrious husband knew no abatement; and one of her favourite occupations was the collection of materials for a biography which should do justice to his career.

The Duke's last appearance in the House of Lords, was on the 27th of November, 1721. He spent the winter in London, in the society of his friends and

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relations, his children and grand-children; and in May removed to Windsor Lodge. Towards the beginning of June, he suffered from a severe return of his paralytic disorder, which did not seem mitigated by the usual remedies. For several days he lay helpless, fully sensible of his approaching dissolution, and able to listen intelligently to the prayers which were read to him. On the evening before his decease, the Duchess inquired whether he had heard them. "Yes," he replied distinctly, "and I joined in them." As he was then upon a couch, she asked whether he would not be easier on his bed, and on his giving an affirmative answer, he was removed to his apartment. No symptons of immediate danger presenting themselves, his family and servants gradually withdrew, leaving the Duchess and the doctors in attendance; but about four o'clock in the evening his strength suddenly failed, and he yielded his spirit to his Maker, in the 72nd year of his age.

He was honoured with a public funeral, on a magnificent scale in Westminster Abbey; but his body was afterwards conveyed to Blenheim, and deposited there, in a stately mausoleum, which the Duchess caused to be constructed from the designs of Rysbrack.

By his will he bequeathed to the Duchess a jointure

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of £15,000 per annum, and a sum of £10,000 a year, for five years, to be expended in the completion of the palace at Blenheim. By other testamentary dispositions he showed that she had retained to the last his love and confidence.

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V.

A WEALTHY widow, preserving all the vivacity of her early womanhood, and something of her personal beauty, the Duchess was soon beset by suitors for her hand. One of these was Thomas Earl of Coningsby, who had long been her admirer, and a devoted partisan of her great husband, and who both as a soldier and a statesman had earned distinction. He had two children, and he endeavoured to engage her interest in them, preparatory to advancing his own claims. When he thought he had to some extent succeeded, he addressed to her the following offer, which reads like the love-lorn effusion of a youthful swain.*

"... And these little innocents have been my only comforters and counsellors, and, under God, my support, from the most dismal day I was so unfortunate to be deprived of the most delightful conversation of my dearest, dearest Lady Marlborough, to whom alone

* Dated "Albemarle Street, Nov. 20, 1722."

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I could open the innermost thoughts of my loaded heart; and by whose exalted wisdom, and by a friendship more sincere than is now to be met in any other breast among all the men and women in the world, I found relief from all my then prevailing apprehensions, and was sometimes put in hope that the great and Almighty Disposer of all things would, out of His infinite goodness to me, at his own time and in his own way, establish these blessings (which he then showed me but a glimpse of, and suffered me to enjoy but a moment,) to me for the term of my happy life.

"How these pleasing expectations were frightfully lessened by the ill state of health I found you in at Blenheim, I need not tell you, because you could not but see the confusion the melancholy sight put me into. And it was no small addition to my concern to see (as I imagined, at least) so much indifference in the preservation of a life so precious among those interested with it; and had I not been deluded to believe that I should soon have the honour to see your grace here, I had, before I left Woodstock, sent to you to know by what safe method I might communicate to you any matter necessary for you to be informed of, relative to my dear country, or your still dearer self.

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"But I was not only disappointed of these intentions by the long progress you have made, and during which time, by inquiring every day at your door, I learned from your porter that he knew not how to send a letter to you till you returned to St. Albans, and where, the moment I knew you were arrived, I presumed to send you the letter to which you honoured me with an answer by the post, but likewise by your letter coming in that way; and now I am altogether at a loss to tell my dear Lady Marlborough whether the pleasure that dear letter brought me, or the terrors it gave me, had the ascendant in me, and of this doubt you, and you alone, must judge.

"First, then, the pleasure was infinite to hear that your health was restored to you.

"But then the terror was unutterable when you took so much pains to let me know how little you valued a life that I thought inestimable.

"Again, the pleasure was vastly great in reading those delightful words which so fully expressed sincere Lady Marlborough's regard to me, and concern for me and my dearest children.

"But then the terror was insupportable upon me, when I found you were unalterably determined not to see this place this winter, but likewise your letter

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being sent by the post, and which was opened by the miscreants of the office, seemed to be a sort of dreadful indication to me, that you designed to put an end to all future correspondence with me.

"And when I had the additional mortification of being assured that you had been in town, and at your own house, for a day and a night, and would not allow me or mine the least notice of it, which, with the dismal thoughts that it brought into my head and heart, I will for my own ease strive for ever, for ever to forget.

"Your commanding my dearest Peggy to show me the letter your most beloved writ to her, will help me to this happiness, and makes me hope I shall receive an assurance, under your dearest hand, that you designed it for that purpose.

"Though I desire above all things in this world to see you for a moment, yet so much do I prize Lady Marlborough's safety above my own satisfaction, that I would not have you in this distracted place, at this dismal juncture, for any consideration under heaven. I intend, by God's permission, to leave it myself soon; but whither to go, or how to dispose of a life entirely devoted to you, I know not till I receive your orders and commands.

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"But I live in hopes that the great and glorious Creator of the world, who does and must direct all things, will direct you to make me the happiest man upon the face of the earth, and enable me to make my dearest, dearest Lady Marlborough, as she is the wisest and the best, the happiest of all women.

"I am, your grace knows I am, with the truest, the sincerest, and the most faithful heart,

"Your Grace's

"Most dutiful and most obedient

"Humble servant,

"CONINGSBY."

"There is no such cattle or sheep as your grace desires, to be had till July next."

The Duchess's reply to this remarkable effusion of egotistical complacency is not preserved; but one can imagine that it was sufficiently contemptuous in tone. Her strong mind must have revolted from such an address to a woman who had had the honour of being the companion, confidante, and adviser of the hero of Blenheim. Had she degraded herself by accepting his hand, she would soon have been a widow for the second time, as Lord Coningsby died in 1729.

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Another suitor presented himself within about a year of the great Duke's death, namely, that Duke of Somerset (Charles the Sixth) whose pride has become proverbial. In fact, it amounted to a monomania, and its exhibitions were not infrequently ridiculous. His commands to his servants were given by signs. When he travelled, he required the roads to be cleared of vulgar spectators and of every obstacle. He never allowed his children to sit down in his presence; and insisted that one of his daughters should stand on each side of him when he took his daily nap, "his custom in the afternoon." On one occasion, Lady Charlotte Seymour was so fatigued that, trusting to her father not observing her, she sat down; an offence which he punished by leaving her £20,000 less than her sister. No doubt, when he offered his hand to the widowed Duchess, it was in the spirit of a Sultan throwing his handkerchief (according to the old tradition) to some fair Circassian; but the Duchess met him with a pride equal to his own, declining a second marriage as unsuitable to her age, and adding, that were she addressed by the emperor of the world, she would not permit him to succeed in that heart which had been devoted to John, Duke of Marlborough. For these noble words, we are

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ready to forgive her much of the petulance and weakness which overclouded her declining years.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity." Not always; some natures deteriorate when subjected to unfavourable influences. They are like flowers which throw out an incense of sweet odours only in the sunshine. Such was the Duchess of Marlborough's. The disappointment and opposition, which she experienced in the closing years of Queen Anne's reign, and the circumstances which led to the humiliation of her husband and herself, developed the harsher qualities of her character; and her temper, always quick and imperious, degenerated into a chronic irritability, the source and cause of incessant difficulties.

We do not care to dwell on the picture of her old age, when all that was gracious and graceful in her who had won and retained the devotion of the great Duke had disappeared. We do not care to enter upon the record of her numerous quarrels. A few touches will complete the biographical study on which we have been engaged. In the world of Fashion one of her principal rivals was the Duchess of Buckingham, who gathered around her the Tories and Jacobites, while Marlborough House was recognized as the headquarters of the Whigs. It is probable

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that the two Duchesses agreed on one point only, their detestation of Sir Robert Walpole. Of the feud which raged between them, Horace Walpole relates several incidents. He tells us that on the death of her son, the Duchess of Buckingham desired to honour him with a funeral pageant equal in pomp to that which a grateful nation had bestowed upon Marlborough. Accordingly, she requested from the Duchess the loan of the funeral car. "It carried my Lord Marlborough," replied the indignant Sarah, "and it shall never carry any other." "I have consulted the undertaker," retorted the Duchess of Buckingham, "and he tells me I may have the same for twenty pounds." We fancy the retort is due to Horace Walpole's inventiveness. The Duchess of Buckingham was rather the cause of wit in others, than witty in herself.

It is a literary problem whether Pope's celebrated satire on 'Atossa' applies to the Duchess of Buckingham, or her grace of Marlborough. The popular story runs that the polished and venomous verse was first shown to the latter, as if intended for her rival; but that the "shrewd Sarah" immediately recognised the true original, and interrupted the person who read it,—"I see what you mean, I cannot

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be so imposed upon." Her wrath against the satirist was great; but she was afterwards reconciled, and gave Pope a thousand pounds to suppress the character. The improbabilities of this story are very great. The Duchess never showed any keen susceptibility to satirical attacks; and would assuredly have submitted to the pelting of all the wits of the day rather than sacrifice a thousand pounds. Nor does it appear that she ever gave Pope any special cause of offence. On a close examination it will be seen that, as applied to Duchess Sarah, the lines would lose most of their force:—

> "But what are these to great Atossa's mind?
> Scarce one herself, by turns all womankind!
> Who with herself, or others, from her birth,
> Finds all her life one warfare upon earth;
> Shines in exposing knaves and painting fools,
> Yet is whate'er she hates and ridicules;
> No thought advances, but her eddy brain
> Whisks it about, and down it goes again."

Satire, to be effective, must have a substratum of truth; and truth is wanting here. The Duchess of Marlborough was certainly not open to the charge of volatility:

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"Full sixty years the world has been her trade;
The wisest fool much time has ever made;
From loveless youth to unrespected age,
No passion gratified except her rage."

Here again, the shafts of the satirist find no fit target in the Duchess:

"Who breaks with her provokes revenge from hell,
But he's a bolder man who dares be well.
Her every turn with violence pursued,
Nor more a storm her hate than gratitude;
To that each passion turns or soon or late;
Look, if it makes her yield, must make her hate."

Duchess Sarah could hardly have taken to herself this last infelicitous line:

"Superiors?—death! and equals?—what a curse;
But an inferior not dependent?—worse.
Offend her, and she knows not to forgive;
Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live;
But die, and she'll adore you—then the bust
And temple rise—then fall again to dust.
Last night her lord was all that's good and great,
A knave this morning, and his will a cheat."

This last couplet alone should convince the reader

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that Pope's Atossa was not the Duchess of Marlborough. It is true that we do not expect absolute accuracy or faithfulness in a satirist; but his satire, if entirely misapplied, must necessarily lose its point, and prove innocuous. Pope was too skilful a marksman to have shot his arrows so egregiously wide of the mark, as would have been the case if he had intended these lines for Marlborough's widow:

> "Strange! by the means defeated of the ends,
> By spirit robbed of power, by warmth of friends,
> By wealth of followers! without one distress,
> Sick of herself through very selfishness!
> Atossa, curs'd with every granted prayer,
> Childless with all her children, wants an heir:
> To heirs unknown descends th' unguarded store,
> Or wanders, heaven-directed, to the poor."

Such is the conclusion of Pope's well-known portrait, scarcely any of the features of which resemble those of our Duchess, except the violence of temper; which, indeed, seems to have been common to the fine ladies and women of fashion of the early Hanoverian period.

Sir Robert Walpole, whom the Duchess charac-

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terized as "one of the most worst-bred men she ever saw," was another of her antagonists; and the manner in which she gave vent to her sentiments, drew upon her a grave and well-deserved rebuke from Dr. Hare, afterwards Bishop of Chichester. It must be owned, however, that she was not without just cause of complaint. So much may be said in reference to her quarrel with the Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Caroline. In her domestic discussions, also, she had frequently right on her side; but the world naturally refuses its sympathy to a person who is upon ill terms with everybody, and who wastes an equal resentment on the most trivial as on the most serious offences. A fair and unprejudiced examination of the dispute between the Duchess and her grand-children shows, however, that she had much to endure. When she appeared in court to defend the law suit brought by Lord Charles, son of the Earl of Sunderland, and heir to the Marlborough dukedom, on the diamond-hilted sword, given by the Emperor to the great Duke, being claimed as an heirloom, she replied bravely:— "What! shall I suffer *that* sword, which my lord would have carried to the gates of Paris, to be sent to a pawnbroker's, to have the diamond's picked out one by one?" This may have been harsh and impru-

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dent, but it was justified by her knowledge of the claimant's character. And a letter which Mrs. Thomson quotes, in her ill-digested and rambling volumes, affords convincing proof that the old Duchess, with all her strength of mind and irritability of temper, was insensible neither to the dictates of generosity nor of justice. The letter is addressed to Mr. Scrope, with whom she corresponded confidentially.

"When I saw you last, you said something concerning the Duke of Marlborough [Lord Charles had succeeded to the title], which occasions you this trouble, for you seem to have a good opinion of him, and to wish that I could make him easy. This is to show you that, as to the good qualities you imagine he has, you are mistaken and that it is impossible to make him easy. I will now give you the account of what has happened not long since.

"When he quitted all his employments, he wrote me a very good letter, saying that he had heard I liked he had done it; there are expressions in this letter full as strong and obliging to me as those in this, dated from Althorpe, October 26th, 1733. I answered this civilly, saying, that as his behaviour to me had been so extraordinary for many years, I thought it necessary to have a year or two's experience how he

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would perform his great promises, and that I wished him very well. This was giving him hopes, though with the caution of a lawyer. Soon after this he treated with a Jew, to take up a great sum of money. He wanted my assistance to help in the security, for Lamb has secured all in his power, and would not lessen his own securities on any account. To this letter I gave him a grandmother's advice, telling him the vast sums he had taken up at more than 20 per cent. were as well secured as when the people lent the money; that I thought he would make a much better figure if he lived upon as little as he possibly could, than ever he had done in throwing away so much money, and let his creditors have all that was left out of his estate as far as it would go, and pay what more was due to them when accidents of death increased his revenue, for I could not join in anything that would injure myself or the settlement of his grandfather. I should have told you this before, but in this last professing letter to me, he tells me that he would rather starve than take up money that I did not approve of, and notwithstanding which, in a very few days after my letter, I am assured that Lamb has found a way to help him to a great sum of money; and without saying one word to me, the Duke has

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mortgaged my jointure as soon as I die; which he certainly may do for his own life; and if he lives till his son is twenty-one, he may starve him into joining with him, and destroy his grandfather's settlement upon the whole family; for when the settlement was made, there were so many before him, that the lawyers did not think of giving his son any allowance in his father's lifetime; and I can think of but one way to prevent all this mischief, which I have a mind to do, and that is, when he is of a proper age, to settle out of my own estate such a sum to be paid yearly by my trustees which will hinder him from being forced by his father, upon condition that if he does join with him to sell any of the estate, that which I gave him shall return back to John Spencer, who I make my heir. Whether this will succeed or not, as I wish it, I cannot be sure, but it is doing all I can to secure what the late Duke of Marlborough so passionately desired. He has a great deal in him like his father, but I cannot say he has any guilt, because he really does not know what is right and what is wrong, and will always change every three days what he designed, from the influence and flatteries of wretches who think of nothing but of getting something for them-

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selves; and if I should give him my whole estate he would throw it away as he has done his grandfather's, and he would come at last to the Treasury for a pension for his vote. But I believe you have seen, as as well as I, that pensions and promises at Court are not ready money."

The "John Spencer," to which reference is made in the foregoing, the "Jack Spencer" of the gossip-mongers of the day, was one of the Duchess's favourites, her "Torrismond," as she called him, whom she forgave for his wildness and waywardness, his waste of money, and his inordinate attachment to "those invaluable blessings of a British subject, brandy, small-beer, and tobacco," from sympathy, we imagine, with his "high spirits." With all his faults, there was a candour and a boldness about him which doubtlessly won upon his strong-minded grandmother. Some of her biographers have dealt with her harshly for this partiality; but we suspect that honest Jack had more good qualities than scandalous chroniclers were willing to allow. The Lady Diana Spencer was another favourite, and a very worthy one. She married Lord John Russell, afterwards third Duke of Bedford; but

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to the Duchess's great regret survived her marriage only four years.

Among her friends the Duchess ranked Dr. Hare, Bishop of Chichester; Arthur Maynwaring, the accomplished admirer of Mrs. Oldfield; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; Colley Cibber, the dramatist; Sir Samuel Garth, the celebrated physician, and author of 'The Dispensary;" Willian Penn, and Sir Richard Steele. It was to Lady Mary she communicated the touching anecdote which illustrates so finely her own impetuosity and the Duke's romantic affection. One day, when he had offended her, she cut off the long, fair, full tresses which enhanced her beauty, knowing that he was proud of them, and placed them in an ante-chamber, where he could not fail to see them. To her surprise and mortification, he showed no signs of annoyance, but preserved his usual serene composure. When she sought her ringlets, however, they had disappeared. After the Duke's death, she had the mingled pain and pleasure of finding them in a cabinet belonging to him, in which he kept the articles he most treasured. The Duchess never related this incident without tears.

The story of Blenheim Palace, and the long contest

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between the Duchess and the architect, would be an interesting one to tell, had we the necessary space. There are rare strokes of humour in the correspondence between the irritable and economical employer, and the egotistical and expensive Vanbrugh. Our sympathies, to a great extent, are on the side of the former; for we are conscious of not admiring the immense but heavy pile which he raised at so vast an outlay. Three hundred thousand pounds, the estimated total of the sums paid by the Government, the Duke, and the Duchess, seems, at the then value of money, a monstrous price to pay for Blenheim; which has proved something of a "white elephant" to its successive owners ever since. But we cannot extenuate the bitterness of the affronts which the irritated Duchess put at times upon the irritable architect; as, for instance, when she ordered her servants to deny him admittance to the mansion he had raised, and desired to show to Lady Carlisle and some of her family. Nor can we defend her proneness to petty litigation about petty debts. On the other hand, it is very fair to remember her own apology: "I was always," she says, "against building at such expense, and as long as I meddled with it at all, I took as much pains to lessen the charge every way, as if it had been to be

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paid for out of the fortune that was to provide for my own children; for I always thought it too great a sum even for the Queen to pay. . . . But I never liked any building so much for the show and vanity of it, as for its usefulness and convenience, and therefore I was always against the whole design of it, as too big and unwieldy; whether I considered the pleasure of living in it, or the good of my family that were to enjoy it hereafter; besides that the greatness of the work made it longer in finishing, and consequently would hinder Lord Marlborough from enjoying it when it was reasonable to lose no time; and I made Mr. Vanbrugh my enemy by the constant disputes I had with him to prevent his extravagance, which I did effectually in many instances, notwithstanding all the folly and waste which, in spite of all that would be said, he has certainly committed."

Her last years were beguiled by the occupations of writing an elaborate vindication of her conduct and character, of which we have made free use, and in the composition of which she was assisted by the ingenious Dr. Hooke;* in collecting the materials

* He received five thousand pounds for his share in an 'Account

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necessary for a full biography of her great husband, in conducting a multifarious correspondence, and in recording her impressions of the events she had witnessed, and the distinguished personages she had known. The activity of her intellect was wonderful, and continued to the last; nor did old age with its physical ailments enfeeble her judgment, or impair her faculty of observation. We cannot add that it had any ameliorating effect on her temper. Her resentments blazed as brightly as ever; and her antipathy to "Sir Robert" continued down to the moment of his fall. How gallantly she strove against the pressure of increasing infirmities we may gather from Horace Walpole's well-known brutal sneer: "Old Marlborough is dying," he writes to Sir Horace Mann; "but who can tell? Last year she had lain a great while ill, without speaking; her physicians said she must be blistered, or she would die; she called out, 'I won't be blistered, and I won't die.' If she takes the same resolution now, I don't believe she will." But to her as to all came the inevitable summons;

of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, from her first coming to Court to the year 1710.'

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and with a bodily frame sorely weakened, but a spirit still indomitable, she lingered through the summer and autumn of 1744, to pass away on the 28th of October, in the 85th year of her age. She died at Marlborough House. Her remains were removed to Blenheim, and interred in the stately mausoleum which contains the dust of her illustrious husband.

We shall not attempt an elaborate analysis of so complex a character—a character so strongly marked by lights and shades, virtues and failings. That we cannot agree with her severe censors will be evident to the reader from the tone of the preceding sketch. Indeed, we most confess to a reluctant admiration of this bold, strong, candid woman, so masterful, so self-reliant, so audacious in her truthfulness, so open in her enmity, so quick of discernment, and so resolute of will. Compared with most of the Representative Women of her time, she assumes quite a heroic standard. Her good and great qualities were all her own; her errors were due to the circumstances of her early training, and the influence of the atmosphere in which she moved. Judge her honestly and fairly, apart from the slanders

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of contemporary pamphleteers, and we shall own that there was no woman in Anne's Court so worthy of being Anne's friend as Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough.

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LADY MORGAN.

A.D. 1777–1859.

I.

SYDNEY OWENSON, Lady Morgan, claimed the inalienable female privilege of betraying the secret of her age to no mortal man: and hence her biographers are unable to furnish that usually important fact in all biography, the date of birth. Yet there seems a general understanding that she was born in 1777 or 1778. Her parentage, however, is involved in no such mystery. It is well-known that her father, Robert MacOwen, was an Irishman; her mother, Miss Hill, an Englishwoman. The MacOwens professed to be of Norman descent, and to have settled in Connaught in the reign of Elizabeth. In spite of his high lineage, Sydney's father, a handsome man, with a good deal of Irish vivaciousness in his blood, was only the steward and sub-agent of an Irish landholder, until his theatrical tastes drew him to London, where his kinsman, Oliver Goldsmith, introduced him to Garrick, and anglicising his name

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into Owenson, he went on the stage. As an actor, especially in Irish parts, he obtained some popularity; and his wit and personal graces recommended him to the favour of Miss Hill, whom he married. Their first child was the future Lady Morgan, named Sydney in honour of the famous Elizabethan Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sydney, who governed Ireland when the MacOwens settled there. In the course of his erratic career Owenson visited Dublin, where he opened what he was pleased to designate the National Theatre, for the special encouragement of native talent. It had but a brief existence; and its founder was glad to accept for awhile the deputy managership of the Theatre Royal. Afterwards he performed alternately at Castlebar, Sligo, and Athlone, together with his diminutive but precocious daughter, who, in 1788, figured in the playbills as the "Infant Prodigy." "I well remember," says a Dr. Burke, quoted by Mr. Fitzgerald, "the pleasure with which I saw Owenson personate Major O'Flaherty in Cumberland's then highly popular comedy of the 'West Indian,' and I also well remember that the long afterwards widely famed Lady Morgan performed at the same time with her father, either in the 'West Indian,' or an after-piece. This took place at Castlebar, before the merry,

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convivial Tyrawley, and the officers of the North Mayo Militia. Their reception was enthusiastic in the extreme."

Mrs. Owenson died while young, leaving two daughters, Sydney and Olivia, over whom their father watched with extraordinary care and tenderness. Twice a day he accompanied them in a walk into the country. They were his constant companions, and profited much by the conversation of a man of good natural parts, with an extensive knowledge of men and manners. Sydney was sent to a respectable school in Dublin, conducted by a Miss Crowe, and afterwards to one of greater pretensions, Clontarf House, superintended by a Madame Terson. Of her introduction here she gives, in her lively but imaginative autobiography, the following account :—

"Madame Terson led us into a spacious room of very scholastic appearance, with desks, and books, and benches, backboards, and stocks. The windows of the further end looked on the sea. There was no one in the room except two little girls, the daughters of the illustrious Grattan, apparently about our own age, and curiously dressed, as though they belonged to some order. They sat with their hands clasped together at the farthest window.

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"Madame Terson put our hands into theirs, and told us she would order some fruit and *bonbons;* she said the young ladies, who were now out walking, would soon be back and cheer us up. She then went away. The two little girls looked at us sulkily and shyly; the eldest haughtily.

"We said nothing because we had nothing to say.

"The eldest, at length, broke silence with the simple question, 'What is your name?'

"I answered, 'Sydney Owenson.'

"'*My* name,' continued my interrogator, 'is Grattan—Mary Anne Grattan—and,' looking very grand, '*my* papa is the greatest man in Ireland. What is *your* papa?'

"The question puzzled me, and I did not reply. On her reiteration of the inquiry, I replied, 'My papa is free of the six and ten per cents.'

"The answer stunned her, for she understood it no more than I did myself, but probably thought it an order of unknown magnificence."

As with most clever girls, Sydney's education owed more to herself than to her instructors. She read every book that fell in her way; and a good memory and a quick wit enabled her to seize and treasure up all that was good in what she read. She acquired

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some knowledge of French; and early developed the literary faculty, writing short tales, and lisping in numbers. To indulge her poetical moods, she would rise o' nights, and sit up, musing and composing, by the ashes of the kitchen fire. Her father's straitened circumstances necessitating on her part an attempt at independent exertion, she entered the family of Mr. Featherstonehaugh, of Bracklin Castle, as governess. During her residence there she wrote a novel, 'St. Clair,' which she entrusted to the care of a Dublin bookseller named Smith. Previously she had issued, under the patronage of the Countess of Moira, a volume of juvenile performances, entitled 'Poems of a Young Lady,' which was published in London, by Sir R. Philips, of St. Paul's-Churchyard. This introduced her to the literary and fashionable society of Dublin; where her wit, her animal spirits, and her charming conversation soon made her popular. The publication of 'St. Clair' in 1801 increased her reputation; and, unquestionably, the book was one of considerable promise. Though the plot and scenes are improbable and the characters mere shadows, the descriptive passages are lively, and the style often rises into an impassioned eloquence. The quotations and criticisms are of the most heterogenous nature, but they testify

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to the variety and extent of the young authoress's reading. An engagement as governess at Nenagh House drew her still more into society. She writes :— "The other night we were at an immense row at Lady Clonbrock's, to whom I owe so many obligations for her marked attention to me since my residence here that I am at a loss how to mention them. It was quite a musical party, and (give me joy), on the decision of Lord Norbury (who was of the party), I bore away the palm from all their Italian music by the old Irish airs of 'Ned of the Hills,' and the 'Colleen,' to which I had adapted words, and I was interrupted three times by plaudits in 'The Soldier Tired.' Now, I know you will all laugh at me, but the people here are setting me mad, and so you must bear up with the effects of it for a little while, until I become accustomed to the applause of the great." Sydney Owenson liked Society, and Society in return liked Sydney Owenson. She was well fitted to become a social attraction. Her musical taste was good, and her voice fresh and sweet. She sang Irish melodies as only an Irish girl can sing them, and she played on the harp with skill and expression. Then her manners were engaging in their frankness, and even her freedom from the con-

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ventional was not without a charm. She was not witty; but her conversation had that sparkle and fluency which, in a pretty woman, passes for wit. And pretty Sydney Owenson was; her features were well formed, her eyes dark and luminous, her smile was enchanting, and her countenance shone with intelligence. Slightly deformed, her motions nevertheless were easy and graceful; she danced with spirit; and she dressed with an originality which completed her attractiveness.

We get a glimpse of this piquant and picturesque creature in one of her letters, dated January, 1803, which certainly engages our interest:—"I must tell you," she writes, "I am *ambitious*, far, far beyond the line of laudible *emulations*, perhaps beyond the power of being happy. Yet the strongest point of my ambition is to be *every inch a woman*. Delighted with the pages of 'La Voisine,' I dropped the study of chemistry, though urged to it by a favourite friend and preceptor, lest I should be less the *woman*. Seduced by taste, and a thousand arguments, to Greek and Latin, I resisted, lest I should not be a *very woman*. And I have studied music rather as a sentiment than a science, and *drawing* as an amusement rather than as an *art*, lest I should have become a

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musical *pedant* or a *masculine artist.* . . . 'Castle Hyde' I am not a little anxious about, since I have taken the trouble of dedicating it to you [a Mrs. Lefanu], as I dedicated 'Ned of the Hills' to Lady Clonbrock—the two friends whose tastes I most admire and revere. It is but just 'Castle Hyde' should be all your own, since your approbation gave it a new value in my opinion, and tempted me to its publication. Have you, indeed, read 'St. Clair' a third time? You have touched me where I am most vulnerable. I cannot conceive how you can think my hero and heroine dangerous; to have rendered them such I must have been myself not a little so; yet you know long since I am the most harmless of all human beings."

In 1804 Miss Owenson joined her father and sister at Inniskillin, where she wrote and completed her romance of the 'Novice of St. Dominic.' It extended to six volumes; but Sir R. Philips, the London publisher, insisted on its being cut down to four, and it would have been a better book if it had been reduced to one. It found favour, however, with the novel-readers of the day; and in defence of it may be mentioned the fact that it was much liked by William Pitt, who read it a second time during his last illness.

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Sydney was now, as one of her biographers remarks, a successful writer, with her name in the papers, and her praises in the post-office. At the present day she would have found it infinitely more difficult to make a reputation, and it may be doubted whether either of her earlier works would have secured a reader. She was born in a fortunate age for writers of fiction; before the epoch of the great revival by Dickens and Bulwer Lytton, to say nothing of Hook, Mrs. Gore, and other *dii minores*. The author of 'Waverley' had not yet risen upon the horizon, and the reading world had no better food in the way of fiction than the novels of Mrs. Opie, Charlotte Smith, the Lees, and their feeble imitators. It is quite possible to understand that to the taste debilitated by a literary course of this unsatisfactory nature Sydney Owenson's stories would have a desirable flavour of freshness. The wine was not of the best quality; but it was better than milk and water. So, Sydney was "petted by her publisher," and encouraged by an indulgent public. In private circles the adulation offered with true Irish fervour to her beauty, her talents, and her taste might have dizzied a stronger brain. Lovers sighed at her feet, and whispered soft nothings in her ear. But though she

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"played with the fire," her good sense and her clear perception of right and wrong prevented her from incurring any real danger.

Finding that a "potentiality of wealth" lay in her pen, she addressed herself to the composition of another novel, on which she certainly bestowed more labour than on either of her preceding efforts. This was the 'Wild Irish Girl,' the first of her works which had any claim to serious criticism. It was published by Sir Richard Philips in 1806, and the copyright brought her the very handsome sum of £300. Its success was immediate; in two years seven editions were sold. And on the whole, it deserved its success. It opened up new ground; and dealt with Irish scenery, Irish characters, and Irish events in a spirit of equal truth and liveliness. Its descriptions are often felicitous; and if the situations too often remind us of Mrs. Radcliffe, the heroine, Glorvina, is certainly an original sketch, with a spontaneity and a charm that the reader does not fail to recognize. It is generally identified with the authoress; but it is Sydney Owenson greatly idealized. A perusal of the 'Wild Irish Girl' produces the impression that the authoress, had she written less and studied more, might really have contributed to English

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literature a work which the world would not willingly let die.

The story, which is said to be founded on an episode in the writer's own life, runs as follows:—

The Honourable Horatio M., younger son of the Earl of M., having been banished to his father's estates in Connaught, "to purge and live cleanly," in the course of his wanderings learns the history of his neighbours, the "Prince" of Innismore and his beautiful daughter. Their ancestors, in the old time, were powerful and wealthy, but the Cromwellian warrior, General M., having slain the young heir of Innismore in the arms of his father, obtains a grant of his domain, which, in due course, descends to the Earl of M. along with a traditional feud, as bitter as a Corsican *vendetta*. The Earl would fain repair the fault of his ancestors, but the Prince haughtily rejects every conciliatory proposal. Horatio, however, nothing daunted, makes his way to the secluded peninsula where the chieftain and his daughter reside, and chances to arrive on the very anniversary of the death of the young heir, when a solemn memorial service was being celebrated in the chapel of Innismore.

"Nearly one half of the chapel had fallen into

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decay, and the ocean breeze, as it rushed through the fractured roof, wafted the torn banners of the family, which hung along its dismantled walls. The red beams of the sinking sun shone on the glittering tabernacle which stood on the altar, and touched with their golden light the sacerdotal vestments of the two officiating priests, who ascended its broken steps at the moment that the Prince and his family entered.

"The first of this most singular and interesting group was the venerable Father John, the chaplain. Religious enthusiasm never gave to the fancied form of the first of the patriarchs a countenance of more holy expression or divine resignation; a figure more touching by its dignified simplicity, or an air more beneficently mild, more meekly good. He was dressed in his pontificals, and, with his eyes bent to earth, his hands spread upon his breast, he joined his coadjutors."

We have here a touch of Mrs. Radcliffe; but the next sketch, with its extraordinary luxuriance of language, is Sydney Owenson's:—

"What a contrast to this saintly being now struck my view; a form, almost gigantic in stature, yet gently thrown forward by evident infirmity, limbs of Her-

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culean mould, and a countenance rather furrowed by the myriads of vehement passions than the deep trace of years; eyes still emanating the ferocity of an unsubdued spirit, yet tempered by a strong trait of benevolence, which like a glory irradiated a broad, expansive brow; a mouth on which, even yet, the spirit of convivial enjoyment seemed to hover, though shaded by two large whiskers on the upper lip, that still preserved their ebon hue, while time or grief had bleached the scattered hairs which hung their snows upon his manly temple."

This remarkable personage is supported by the veiled and slender figure of his daughter; and the two, in silent sorrow, take their accustomed places, while Vespers are duly chanted. The service over, they leave by a private door, which communicates by a ruinous arcade with the castle.

The Hon. Horatio M. "followed them at a distance as they slowly moved along, their fine figures sometimes concealed behind a pillar, and again emerging from the transient shade, flushed with the deep suffusion of the crimsoned firmament.

"Once they paused, as if to admire the beautiful effect of the retreating light, as it faded on the ocean's swelling bosom; and once the Princess raised her

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hand and pointed to the evening star, which rose brilliantly on the deep cerulean blue of a cloudless atmosphere, and shed its fairy beams on the mossy summit of a mouldering turret."

The Hon. Horatio M. is on the point of bidding farewell to this romantic retreat when a strain of witching music falls upon his ears. He directs his steps to the angle of the building whence it seemed to proceed; and, "perceiving an open casement, I climbed," he says, "with some difficulty, the ruins of a parapet wall, which, rising immediately under the casement, gave me, when I stood on it, a perfect view of the interior of that apartment to which it belonged.

"Two tapers burned on a marble slab at the remotest extremity of this vast and gloomy chamber, and shed their dim blue light on the saintly countenance of Father John, who, with a large folio open before him, seemed wholly wrapped in studious meditation; while the Prince, reclining on an immense Gothic couch, with his arm thrown over the arm that supported his head, betrayed, by the expression of his countenance, those emotions which agitated his soul as he listened to those strains which at once spoke to the heart of the father, the patriot,

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and the man — breathed from the chords of his country's emblem — breathed in the pathos of his country's music — breathed from the lips of his apparently inspired daughter! The 'white rising of her hands upon the harp'— the half-drawn veil that imperfectly discovered the countenance of a seraph — the moonlight that played round her fine form, and partially touched her drapery with its silver beam—her attitude—her air!— but how cold, how inanimate, how imperfect this description! Oh! could I but seize the touching features, could I but realize the vivid tints of this enchanting picture, as they then glowed on my fancy."

This is tawdry and extravagant; and the critic of to-day would visit it with severe censure. Yet there is strength in the extravagance; and throughout the story a force of movement which carries the reader along with it.

While gazing on the romantic picture so romantically described, the Earl's son misses his footing, and the fortunate accident of a broken arm procures him admission into the castle of Innismore. He introduces himself as Henry Mortimer, an English gentleman, compelled by stress of fortune to gain his living as an artist, and drawn to Innismore by

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love of the picturesque. The days pass by very pleasantly. The priest is a man of culture; the Prince entertains his guest with polished urbanity; while Glorvina, blue-eyed and golden-haired, a wonderful compound of intellect, imagination, and erudition, brimming over with innocent sportiveness, patriotic to the core, bright, mirthful, and yet capable of deep emotion, is all that is fascinating. It is needless to say that between this "child of genius and of passion" and the supposed artist a strong attachment springs up; but to prevent the abrupt termination of the romance, it is necessary that obstacles should intervene, and at length "Henry Mortimer" leaves the castle, disconsolate.

On returning to his own sphere he finds that his father has selected for him a fair and wealthy bride. The marriage is fixed to take place at M. House, within a few miles of the enchanted castle, whither accident and inclination lead the young lover's steps. He finds it silent, desolate, and dark. Glorvina's father has been arrested for debt; a somewhat unromantic incident to connect with an ancient chieftain of "Herculean mould!" Without further thought of his intended bride, the Honourable Horatio hastens to the neighbouring town, only to learn that Mr. O'Mel-

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ville, the aforesaid Prince of Innismore, has been released through the interposition of a friend, and conveyed back to the castle by a circuitous route; also, that Glorvina is dangerously ill, and about, after a struggle between love and duty, to give her hand to her father's deliverer. Hurrying back to the castle, Horatio bursts into the chapel, to find the wan and tottering Glorvina standing before the altar with a gentleman of distinguished bearing,—no other than the Earl of M.! A general *éclaircissement* ensues. The dying Prince discovers in the generous friend about to wed his daughter his ancestral enemy, and the son of that enemy in the youth whom he hospitably entertained. The knowledge overwhelms him, and sinking back he dies in his daughter's arms. Of course Lord M. resigns Glorvina to his son, whose betrothed has correctly and conveniently eloped in the interval.

The title originally proposed for this romance was 'The Prince of Innismore'; and that of 'The Wild Irish Girl' was substituted at the suggestion of Dr. Wolcott ('Peter Pindar'). It is certainly more attractive, but it is utterly inapplicable. The heroine, Glorvina, has nothing wild about her; but might rather lay claim to the character of a *bas bleu*.

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Here we may introduce a sketch of the authoress, as she appeared to one who knew her. After allowance has been made for the exaggerations of friendship, we think it may be accepted by the reader.

"Endowed with faculties for social success—she sang well and played well, both on the piano and the harp—she danced like a fairy (an Irish fairy, be it understood), she was very graceful, and if the testimony of the many men who fell in love with her may be believed, she was beautiful. She could tell stories, especially Irish stories, with a spirit of drollery that was irresistible; her gift of narrative was very great; she possessed that rare quality in a woman—humour—and she was as witty as though *l'esprit de tous les Mortemours* had inspired her. From her most tender years she had been produced in society and encouraged to produce herself; she had the power to amuse everybody; of all personal faculties this gift is perhaps the most seducing and intoxicating to the possessor. Full of Irish fun and Irish spirits she was entirely bewitching. She enjoyed her own gifts, and her evident delight in her powers was one great secret of her power of pleasing others. From the very nature of her position she was, to a certain degree, an adventuress,

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for she had nothing, and no one to depend upon, but herself. Her own talents were the means by which alone she could make herself a position in the world."

Sydney Owenson was vain, but with an innocent vanity and ambition,—and an ambition which could injure no one, not even herself. She desired to shine in society, to become a social success; and her desire was fulfilled. But she was capable also of higher aspirations; and unquestionably among these was a yearning to serve her country, to expose its grievances that they might be relieved, and to enlarge on its beauties that they might be admired. Less dignified, perhaps, but not less laudable, was her longing to relieve her father from his pecuniary embarrassments, and to secure him a competence in his old age.

Her biographer claims for her that she was possessed of genius; but the sober critic can allow no such claim. She was endowed with a certain amount of cleverness, great confidence in herself, quickness of observation, and readiness of expression; but of the vision and faculty divine which we call genius she had not an iota. She knew very well the measure of her powers, and never went beyond it.

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Her books served her purpose, and served the purpose of the reader for a time; but they have in them no element of permanency. Of all the long series, which is popular now?— not even 'O'Donnel,' which we take to be her best. After all, it was not her intellectual power which gave her a place in society, and made her a woman of fashion, though her literary reputation assisted; it was herself, her vivacity, her brightness of conversation, her tact, her courage, and her good nature.

Always industrious, Sydney brought out in 1808 her romance of 'Woman; or Ida in Athens,' an inferior book, redeemed only by its touches of sympathy with enslaved and suffering Greece. This was followed by 'The Missionary,' written at Baron's Court, the seat of the Marquis and Marchioness of Abercorn. We plead guilty to not having read it, though we have made an effort. But we have the bad taste to care little for Châteaubriand's 'Atala;' and 'The Missionary' seems to be 'Atala' diluted. Miss Kavanagh, who, as an accomplished novelist, ought to be a judge, speaks of it as a rhapsody in three volumes, and as marked by a feverish passion, which is the last quality we should have imagined any of Lady

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Morgan's works would exhibit. "The missionary, a Portuguese Franciscan of great sanctity, goes to India to convert the infidel. Luxima, a lovely Brahmin priestess of Cashmere, lives in a sacred and beautiful retreat near his hermitage. They meet and love, and the missionary learns to feel his weakness in her presence. On both sides the struggles are severe. The sanctity of his vows binds one—the prejudices of faith and caste fettered the other. Their meetings are discovered; and Luxima, pronounced an outcast, flies with the monk . . . They are pursued and captured. They escape, but not before Luxima receives a mortal wound. She dies in the lonely cavern by the seashore to which Hilarion had conveyed her. She expires in his arms, loving him to the last, but to the last also faithful—in her heart, at least—to the gods of her country. This clinging to the worship of her youth is the only characteristic of this lovely, but weak and fond woman. Hilarion is more nobly conceived. He never fairly yields to his passion: he struggles against it with all his might, and expiates it by a long life of penance in a remote solitude."

From this outline of the plot, we should say that the book was an unwholesome one and an unreal

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one. We do not wonder that the Marquis of Abercorn declared it "the greatest nonsense he had ever heard in his life," or that Lady Abercorn "yawned over it dismally."

Its authoress now mixed "in the best of good society." The daughter of the "poor player," on the strength of her personal graces, her third-rate novels, and her *espièglerie* of character, had made her way into the inner circles of the fashionable world, where she was petted and made much of by lords and ladies. This success did not spoil her. Long afterwards she would frankly tell a story of those early brilliant days, which shows the honesty that lay at the bottom of all her follies. She had but little money, and her wardrobe was slender. Dress was expensive, and white satin shoes especially were luxuries not easily acquired. One evening, at a party, the company were practising the waltz, then recently introduced into England. Lord Hartington was Miss Owenson's partner; she was dancing with her customary energy, when her foot slipped, and in the effort to recover herself, she split one of her white slippers, her only pair, beyond all possibility of retrieval. The mishap so mortified her that she could not command her tears. Lord Hartington, much distressed, inquired

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the cause of her sudden affliction. "My satin shoes are ruined, and I have not another pair!" Lord Hartington (afterwards the most popular of all popular Dukes of Devonshire), instead of laughing, said very kindly: "Don't cry for that, dear Glorvina; you shall have the very prettiest pair of white satin shoes that can be found in all Paris!"

He was as good as his word. Next day the shoes arrived in the ambassador's bag, for the Marquis had left for Paris immediately, on a visit of pleasure, with the following note:—

"My dear Miss Owenson,—I send you the long-promised shoes, which, however, without your encouragement last night, would not have dared present themselves to you. They are not what I intended, being like all other shoes; but Paris could never produce anything like the vision of a shoe that I had in my mind's eye for you. I depend upon your sending me Luxima . . ."

Miss Owenson in her reply alluded to her intended acceptance of an offer of Lady Abercorn's to enter her household:—

"Before *The Wild Irish Girl* is *mit aux abois*, and taken alive in the snare that has been artfully laid for her, she begs to lay at your Grace's feet the last

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offerings of her liberty; and by whatever name your Grace may prefer of the four you bestowed on me—whether *Puck* or Glorvina, Luxima or Mother Goose, she invokes your acceptance of the trifle which accompanies this. She is ignorant whether her *keepers* mean to exhibit her for her intelligence or her ferocity, like the learned pig at Exeter Change, or the beautiful hyæna at the Tower, which never was tamed. But whatever part she is destined to play in her cage, it is certain that she will often look forth with delight to those days of her freedom, when, untaught and untamed, she contributed to your Grace's amusement, and imbibed those sentiments of respect and esteem for your character, with which she has the honour to subscribe herself your obliged and obedient servant, GLORVINA."

While residing with the Abercorn family at Stanmore Priory, Miss Owenson sat for her portrait to Sir Thomas Lawrence. He produced a charming picture, with a wonderful air of youthfulness about it; so that the ignorant gazer would suppose it to be that of a maiden of two- or three-and-twenty, rather than of a woman who had reached the maturity of three-and-thirty. A few months later she painted herself, in words; and with just as much truth as we

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are all of us capable of when we sit down to the task of self-portraiture. For many reasons, however, the description is worth quoting; and at least it shows that the successful authoress and the pet of fashion had her hours of meditation and even of depression:—

"SELF, 1811.

"Inconsiderate and indiscreet, never saved by prudence, but often rescued by pride; often on the very verge of error, but never passing the line. . . ."

[When a person admits that he has touched the threshold of error, his friends—or enemies—and the latter are generally the milder judges—will never be convinced that he has not overstepped it.]

". . . Committing myself in every way—*except in my own esteem,*—without any command over my feelings, my words, or my writings,—yet full of self-possession as to action and conduct,—once reaching the boundary of right even with my feet on the threshold of wrong; capable, like a *ménage* horse, of stopping short, coolly considering the risk I encounter, and turning sharply back for the post from whence I started, feeling myself quite safe, and, in a word,—*quitte pour la peur.*

"Early imbued with the high sentiments belong-

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ing to good birth, and with the fine feelings which accompany good education. My father was a player and a gentleman. I learned early to feel acutely my situation; my nature was supremely above my circumstances and situation; the first principle, or passion, that rooted in my breast was a species of proud indignation, which accompanies me to that premature death of which it is finally the cause. My first point of society was to behold the conflict between two unequal minds—the one (my mother) strong and rigid —the other weak and yielding; the one strong to arrest dispute—the other accelerating its approach. The details which made up its mass were—seeing a father frequently torn to prison—a mother on the point of beggary with her children, and all those shocks of suffering which human nature can disdain, and which can only occur in a certain sphere of life and a certain state of society. Man, who has his appetites to gratify, which Nature supplies in his social or artificial character, has thousands of wants which suffering poverty may deny; and even their gratification is not always attended with effects proportionate to their cause. So delicately and fatally organised, that objects impalpable to others, were by me accurately perceived, felt, and combined; that the faint ray which

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neither warmed nor brightened, often gave a glow and a lustre to my spirits; that the faintest vapour through its evanescent passage through the atmosphere, threw no shadow on the most reflecting object, darkened my prospects, and gloomed my thoughts. Oh! it was this unhappy physical organisation, this nervous susceptibility to every impression, which circulated through my frame and rendered the whole system acute, which formed the basis of that condition of my mind and being, upon which circumstances and events raised the after superstructure. So few have been the days on which I sighed not that night might close on them for ever—that I could now distinctly count them—alas! were they not the most dangerous of my days; the smiling and delusive preparations of supreme misery which time never failed to administer?

"It may be supposed that life hastens to its close when its views are thus tinged with hues so dark and so terrific? But the hand which now writes this, has lost nothing of the contour of health, or the symmetry of youth. I am in possession of all the fame I ever hoped or ambitioned. I wear not the appearance of twenty years; I am now, as I generally am, sad and miserable."

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It is evident that the foregoing was written for the public. The writer assumes quite a theatrical *pose*, and breathes as melancholy a strain as any that Byron ever melodiously murmured. We don't believe in the "supreme misery," or in "the views tinged with hues so dark and terrific." Sydney Owenson, whether as "The Wild Irish Girl" or as "Lady Morgan," greatly enjoyed life; and was constitutionally incapable of the elegant anguish she affected. It is, of course, very comforting to feel ourselves, or fancy ourselves, "delicately and fatally organised;" but such organisations are not in the habit of selecting this peculiar mode of expression. The deepest sorrow is always silent. *Au reste*, the sketch is characterised by that tawdriness and frippery of language which spoils all Lady Morgan's compositions.

At Baron's Court, one of the seats of the Abercorns, Sydney Owenson made the acquaintance of Mr. Charles Morgan, an English surgeon, and a man of considerable ability, amiability and culture. He was a widower; and he soon conceived a warm attachment to the brilliant authoress of 'The Missionary.' The latter was not slow to return it. She had so often played with the fire, and narrowly risked burning; had so often been addressed in the language of

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passion, unaccompanied with respect, that probably she was really thankful for an affection which had in it no element of dishonour. She must have longed, too, for the protection that a husband's name would afford; and at thirty-six she had outlived her hopes, if ever she had any, of securing a splendid match by her genius and accomplishments. The engagement between the two was the occasion of a lengthy correspondence, but we are not sure that either the lover or the lady appears in it to very great advantage. Certainly, on the lady's side, it exhibits no traces of that "delicate and fatal organisation," or of those "views tinged with hues so dark and terrific," which, on her own showing, made her life so sad a burden. Let us take a specimen. She writes as follows on the 31st of October:—

"I am not half such a little rascal as you suppose; the best feelings only have detained me from you; and feelings better than the *best* will bring me back to you. I must be more or less than woman to resist tenderness, goodness, excellence, like yours, and I am simply woman, aye, dear, 'every inch a woman.' I feel a little kind of tingling about the heart, at once more feeling myself nestled in yours; do you remember—well, dear, if you don't, I will soon revive

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your recollections. I said I would not write to you to-day, but I could not resist it, and I am now going off to a man of business, and about Lady Abercorn's books, in the midst of the snow and pinched with cold. God bless you, love.

S. O.

"Your song is charming; you are a clever wretch, and I love you more for your talents than your virtues, you *thing of the world*. What put it into your stupid head that I would not return at Christmas? did I ever say so, blockhead?

"Well, I have only the old *story* to *tell*, no more than yourself,—

"And I loves you, and you loves me,
And oh! how happy we shall be?"

Take care of the *whiskers*—mind they are not to grow thus—but thus." [Here are introduced a couple of "droll" illustrative sketches of Morgan, with whiskers trimmed in two different fashions.]

The surgeon replies, in November, as follows:—

"You are a pretty pair of Paddies, you and your sister. *Only see* how you enclosed your letter

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for me, to Lord Abercorn, without seal and without direction. Your second letter came at the *usual* time; but judge my consternation when Lord Abercorn gave me your *first* at breakfast, *premising he had read three sides of it*, under the supposition it was for him, till he came quite at the end, to 'my dear Morgan,' which rather surprised him. In good truth, the letter is so much like the *Epistle General of St. Jude*, that it will do for *any church*. Well 'the gods take care of Cato.' There was not a word of *his* frolics, of the stupidity of B. C—, of Livy's not coming, or anything one would much care about his reading; but I was in a special fright till I could get an opportunity of reading it, and convincing myself; for Heaven's sake be more careful. I think he must have laughed at your *jealous suspicions*, though I don't believe he has a very high opinion of my *Josephism*. I wish I had something to *confess*, just to *satisfy* you; but, ah, alas! you have the best security in the world for my fidelity, the want of opportunity for me to go astray. For unless I made love to a young diablesse or an old witch, and became the papa of an incubus, the devil a chance have I of doing wrong. I should like to know the 'where and the who,' of your thoughts; perhaps it would

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give me *an idea.* Seriously, my best love, if you doubt me, come and claim your own, for *I am* yours and only yours.

"Dearest girl, how much I wish I could say anything satisfactory to you, about your father. I *cannot judge* accurately, but all your accounts of him have given me an unfavourable impression of his chance of ultimate recovery. I should think the whiskey *bad* for him; at least, if not rendered *necessary* by circumstances, it must be injurious. Your low spirits distress me very, very much. Would to God I could be with you to soothe and comfort you! I am, however, not less so than yourself, as you must see by my awkward attempts at humour. I am very *irritable* at these times, and do not know whether to laugh or cry.

"My yesterday's letter (written in this mood) was particularly dull and *fade;* I am very much pleased, flattered, delighted by your second letter; it is so decisive a mark of your tenderness and affection. Dearest Glorvina, I *have no* love for any but you; you have my *whole, whole heart,* and if my letters vary, it is because my spirits vary, and with them my *tone* of thinking. When, when will the day come that shall make me *yours* for ever? Glorvina, we have

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both suffered much on each other's account; I feel, however, conscious we shall both be ultimately happy in each other. God, God bless you! I am writing myself into dreadful spirits; I believe catching your tone.

"You give a horrid picture of poor dad! He must have been *very ill indeed* to require so much blistering. I find you are quite in raptures with Dublin. Four dinners besides evening parties in one week; that is pretty well for a person who went there *merely* to enjoy the society of her family for a few weeks. However, if you are amused, I am content. You must want occasional *distraction*, and to be candid, I should be all the better for it, if it were in my reach. Only love me, and write good-humouredly."

For a middle-aged lover, and a widower, the foregoing may be considered sufficiently effusive; but it is surpassed in its "lyrical cry" by a letter written from Baron's Court a few days later. It is true, perhaps, that neither your love-letters, reader, nor mine, would uphold our reputation for common sense if they were given to the world. But then we may suppose that they burned with the fervency of youth; and we certainly flatter ourselves—do we not?—that in our maturer years we should be more chary of our raptures. Had

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the future Sir Charles proved unfaithful, and figured in a trial for "breach of promise," what unextinguishable laughter would the reading in court of such a prose dithyramb as the following have inevitably excited:—

"DEAREST AND BEST, — *Me voici de retour*, and I have just read your dear letter—Great God! how little able am I to bear any crosses in which you are concerned. I cannot free my mind from the idea of your having been *seriously* ill. You say you are better, and I must believe you. But once for all I implore and beseech you, in no instance conceal from me the *full extent* of any sickness or calamity that may reach *you* or *yours*. It is only the entire confidence that communications *are* made, and that nothing would be hid that might happen ill, by which absence is rendered supportable. An anxious, fretful, and *Rousseauish* disposition (like mine) will let the imagination so much get the start of reason, that, when once deceived, I should never feel happy by any communication, however pleasant its nature. I should fancy ten millions of accidents, kept from me *for my good*. I hope and trust you have acted sincerely by me in this instance, and are as well in health and about one-*eighth* part as happy as if you really were '*on my knee!*' What an

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image! How lovely! My bosom swelled in reading it, and the obtrusive drops, for once harbingers of pleasure, danced trembling on my eyelids; *bless* you, BLESS you, dearest love! I do kiss you with my whole heart, and pat your dear *caen dhu* [black head]; and I, too, in my turn, ask your pardon for worrying you in my last but one, and for the two short hasty scrawls of Sunday and yesterday. In each case, however, I really was compelled to be so brief, I should not have written, but, judging by myself, I thought a short letter infinitely preferable to no letter at all; I have just received your parcel, but have had no time to examine anything. You have forgotten my lavender water, of which I am in great want—*mais n'importe.* The ring does *famously.* I kiss it every instant (*now*) and NOW and NOW-W-W-W. Pray take care of the mourning ring you took as a pattern, as I value it much. Lady Abercorn played me an *arch trick* about it. By mistake, she opened the muslin and found the ring; she and Miss Butler *abstracted it.* I missed the expected delight, and flew (*à la moi*), *all over scarlet,* up to her to inquire if it was amongst her parcels, and very soon discovered by her joking how the land lay. Oh! I am a great fool, and it's all along of *you,* you thing you! God bless dear *you,* though, for all that. Lady Abercorn

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will be obliged by the Irish extract from 'Ossian'; her countenance quite brightened when I mentioned it. At this moment my imagination is wandering in delight. I kiss and press you in idea, and I am all fire and passion and tenderness; the sensations are rather too nervous and will leave a horrible depression; but for one such 'five minutes'—perish an eternity! This morning, in bed, at Sir John's, I read part of 'The Way to Keep Him,' and I see now you take the widow for your model; but it won't do, for though I love you in *every* mood, it is only when you are *true to* NATURE, *passionate and tender*, that *I adore* you. You are never less interesting to me than when you *brillez* in a large party: "C'est dans un tête-à-tête, dans la Chambre de Basin que vous êtes vraiment décorée, mais *déesse*-FEMME." *Apropos de la déesse*, your Paphian orders are *not* from Paphos; they are from the coldest chambers of your ice-house *imagination*. Venus disdains them, and Cupid trembles and averts his arrows, fearful of blunting their points: "Je n'ai qu'une seule occupation pour tous les jours, et presque pour toutes les nuits, et c'est de penser de Glorvina." I can neither read nor work, and the weather is horribly bad; how the time passes I can't say, for except writing to *you*, curse me

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if I can tell you any one thing I do from morning to night.

"The *whiskers* thrive, and so, too, does the hair, but you really!

"I cannot write another letter, and yet I cannot bear to part for two days in anger. Imagine all that is harsh and suspicious in this letter *unsaid—I know you love me,* however paradoxical your conduct, and I will try to be content; I cannot bear to give you pain; God bless my dearest love."

It is but fair to Miss Sydney to give another specimen of her share in this rhapsodical love-correspondence. It is in reply to a letter of Morgan's in which he rambles somewhat wildly on the effect of moral, metaphysical, artistical, and literary pursuits, and repeats the old and absurd platitude, that a cultivated imagination is a curse to its possessor. Saith the "brilliant Sydney" (it was fashionable to call her "brilliant"):—

> "And if I answered you, 'I know not what,'
> It shows the name of love."

"Give me, my dear philosopher, ten thousand more such letters, that I may have ten thousand more excuses

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for loving you still better than I do. I glory in my own inferiority when you give that exalted mind of yours fair play. I triumph in my *conscious littleness;* I say, '*and this creature loves me.*' Yes, dearest of all the dears, this is a proud consciousness. I think precisely with you, and agree on the same grounds; but not with the same eloquence that you have done. Davy (Sir Humphry), *après tout,* is a *bornè* man. I dined with him on Saturday last, and he lectured, literally till every one yawned; I said twenty times in the course of the evening to Miss Butler, "how much better *Morgan* would have spoken'; and so you would, dearest. Nothing takes a woman like *mind* in *man;* before that, everything *sinks.* When you talk *en philosophe* to me (even the Philosophy of Love), I adore you. When you make bad puns, and are 'PUT IN MIND," I hate you. So, as you see, my love is a *relative,* not a *positive,* quality. You will know how to manage me, and I wish you every success, dear.

"I shall not write much to you to-day, because I am writing a long, long letter to—to—the—Lord Mayor! Aye, and going to send it to the *Freeman's Journal!!* Don't look frightened to death, you quiz! I always have something to talk to the chief magistrate about, at this season of the year, and now it is about *poor*

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children; but I will send you the paper, and that will best inform you. Just before I sat down to write to you, yesterday, Livy and I had four naked little wretches at the fire warming and feeding, and, to tell the truth, their sufferings added to my nervousness; and *you,* joking and dissipation, had an equal share in the wretched spirits in which I addressed the dearest and the best. 'Oh! Father Abraham, what these Irish be!"—but so it is,—it is next to impossible to follow the quick transitions of our feelings—just as I had got thus far, enter Professor Higgins—our Professor of Chemistry. He came to arrange a collection of mineralogy for Livy, which Clarke bought her with a cabinet, and now, here we are, in the midst of spars, quartz, ores, madrepores, and petrifactions. I know the whole thing now, at my fingers' ends, and all in half an hour!!! The Professor says, I am a clever little soul! I have got a little collection myself; which, with a harp, tripod, fifty volumes, and some music, constitutes all my household furniture—funny enough! Now, *coûte que coûte,* no more dolorous letters; *à quoi bon?* if I were not to marry you, it would be because I loved you too well to involve in difficulties and distress. If I do marry you (and, like Solus, 'I'm pretty sure I shall be married'), I will make you the

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dearest, best, and funniest little wife in the world. Meantime, I prefer you to your whole sex, and so, dearest of all philosophers,

"*Adio,*

"GLORVINA."

There were obstacles in the love-path even of these impassioned lovers; bickerings and petty variances, flirtations on the one side, and jealousies on the other. Occasionally, Morgan bursts out into a tempest of passion which would assuredly have terrified any less self-reliant lady than Glorvina; and Glorvina retorts in cutting little sarcasms, which alternate very oddly with professions of profound devotion. Altogether this correspondence between a woman of 34, with a long and wide experience of the world, and a sober country practitioner, a widower, and some years her senior, is weary and melancholy reading; it has about it such an air of sham and unreality. We are tempted to suppose that the writers contemplated *publication;* and were thinking, when they turned each lively phrase or impassioned period, how it would look in print! We do not say that the affection was a pretence; but the expression of it. And we

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should have had a pleasanter ideal of Lady Morgan if these letters had never been published.

According to a popular story, Mr. Morgan became Sir Thomas Charles Morgan in a manner which recalls some of the incidents of the old English comedy. It is said that both he and the intractable Glorvina were invited to a private ball, given by the then Lord Lieutenant, the good-humoured but erratic Duke of Richmond; and that, in the course of the evening, the Duke inquired of the lady when he should have the pleasure of congratulating her on her marriage. She answered, we are told, that the rumours respecting Mr. Morgan's *dévouement* might or might not be true; but that she could at least, with all candour and sincerity, assure his grace that to the last day of her life she should remain in single blessedness unless some greater inducement was offered than the mere change from Miss Owenson to Mrs. Morgan. Taking up the hint, it is added, the light-hearted Duke immediately bestowed on the surprised doctor the *accolade* of knighthood. That the "honour" was conferred in some such way as this seems to be generally admitted; but we suspect it was due to the influence of the Marquis of Abercorn,

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who had profited much by the knight's medical skill, and had made of Glorvina a pet and a *protégée*.

The lady's career of coquetries was terminated on the 12th of January, 1812, when the marriage took place at Baron's Court. It was in strict keeping with her melo-dramatic mode of life, and—may we say without offence?—truly Irish.

"On a cold morning in January, she was sitting in the library, by the fire, in her morning wrapper, when Lady Abercorn opened the door, and said, 'Glorvina, come upstairs directly, and be married; there must be no more trifling.'"

"Her ladyship took Miss Owenson's arm, and led her upstairs into her dressing-room, where a table was arranged for the ceremony—the family chaplain standing in full canonicals, with his book open, and Sir Charles ready to receive her. There was no escape left. The ceremony proceeded, and the Wild Irish Girl was married past redemption.

"The event had at last come upon her by surprise. No one of the many visitors in the house knew of it coming on thus suddenly; nor was the fact itself announced till some days afterwards, when Lord Abercorn, after dinner, filled his glass and drank to the health of 'Sir Charles and Lady Morgan!'"

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II.

Two events marked the first year of Lady Morgan's married life, the death of her father, to whom she was tenderly attached, and the publication of her novel 'O'Donnel.' While we regard this as, perhaps, the best of her works, we are almost at a loss to explain its popularity when published. The hero is an impossibility; a mere lay figure, dressed up in all the splendid moral, mental, and physical qualities that its creator could accumulate; the scenes are melo-dramatic in conception, and coarse in execution; and the language, often extravagant, is generally careless. It has its merits, it is true, and these were generously recognised by Sir Walter Scott, who, ten years after its appearance, wrote of it thus:—"March 14, 1826. . . . I have amused myself occasionally very pleasantly during the last few days by reading over Lady Morgan's novel of 'O'Donnel,' which has some striking and very beautiful passages of situation and

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description, and in the comic part is very rich and entertaining. I do not remember being so much pleased with it at first. There is a want of story always fatal to a book the first reading—and it is well if it gets a chance of a second." Sir Walter Scott's judgments of contemporary fiction were, however, remarkably lenient; and we are inclined to think that the favour with which 'O'Donnel' was received originated in the fact that it was an *Irish* novel. The English public always welcomes heartily a fiction dealing with Scotch or Irish scenery and characters, even when its literary merits are inconsiderable. We suppose because this scenery and character have an element of romance and distance which does not belong to our more prosaic England, where the comfortable and the commonplace reign supreme. At the same time, the *distance* is not *too* great, as it would be in a novel dealing with Italian life. The characters, moreover, come within the range of English sympathies. We can understand a Scotch or an Irish hero, and recognize him as in some measure one of our own kin, though "far removed;" while an Italian or a Spanish hero is to us always an alien and a stranger.

In 1815, Lady Morgan and her husband visited

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France, and the result was, of course, a book, which, as France had been for some years a *terra incognita*, produced a considerable sensation and was eagerly read. Its sketches are really very bright and amusing; and its egotism was pardonable, considering the flattering attentions which its author had received in Paris. Its liberal opinions, however,—the Conservative of to-day would pronounce them milk-and-water,—fluttered the dove-cotes of English Society under the *régime* of Lord Liverpool; and brought down upon the book a "slashing" article, from the pen of Wilson Croker, in the *Quarterly Review*. The article, in its virulent personalities, is at least as striking a sign of the times as the book that suggested it. Lady Morgan revenged herself by putting the critic into her next novel, 'Florence Macarthy,' where he figures as *Crawley*. Posterity has forgotten *Crawley*, however; while it will not forget *Rigby*. The distinction between the writer of novels and the novelist is vividly apparent in these two characters, both intended as satirical portraitures of the same person. The 'Crawley' of Lady Morgan is a coarse and extravagant caricature, in which the features of the original can scarcely be traced. Lord Beaconsfield's 'Rigby' is the work of an artist. The likeness is unmistakable; yet how

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cleverly and skilfully all the worst points are brought out, so as to justify the reader's instinctive feelings of repulsion and contempt. It has all the sharpness of one of Pope's etchings.

In 1819 and 1820, Lady Morgan and her husband were in Italy, and of course a sojourn in Italy meant a book upon Italy. We are assured that this produced a greater sensation than even the book upon France; and as a tolerably faithful representation of the moral and political condition of Italy at the period of the Bourbon restoration, it has still some value. It was followed in 1822 by the 'Life and Times of Salvator Rosa;' of which it may be said that it is deficient in almost all the qualities that should distinguish a really critical biography, while it abounds in lively writing. Whatever may be thought of Lady Morgan's literary ability, there can be no cavil as to her industry. In our own day we have eminent examples of the fertility of lady writers; but none of them surpass Lady Morgan, especially if it be remembered that she was not only a woman of letters but a woman of fashion; that she mixed constantly in Society; and that she carried on an extensive correspondence with contemporary celebrities, both at home and abroad. Among her more intimate ac-

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quaintances was the beautiful and wayward Lady Caroline Lamb, whose mad passion for Byron clouded her life and left an ineffaceable blot on her fame. Another was Maturin, the gifted but eccentric author of 'Bertram.' Madame Paterson Bonaparte, the American wife of Prince Jerome, was one of her correspondents; and her circle of acquaintances included such lions, big and small, as O'Connell, Ugo Foscolo, Tom Moore, Lydia White (the leader of the "blue-stocking" coterie), Curran, Henry Grattan, and Prince Puckler Muskau. We get a glimpse of her in 1824, in the pages of Henry Crabb Robinson's 'Diary.' He writes:—

"*July* 1*st*.—I dined with Storks, to meet Lady and Sir Charles Morgan, and I was much amused by the visit. Before I went, I was satisfied that I should recognize in the lady one who had attracted my attention at Pistrucci's [the engraver], and my guess was a hit. Lady Morgan did not displease me till I reflected on her conversation. She seems good-natured as well as lively. She talked like one conscious of her importance and superiority. . . . Lady Morgan most offended me by her remarks about Madame de Staël. She talked of her own books. £2400 was asked for a house. 'That will cost me

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two books,' she said. She has seen Prati, who, she says, advises her to go to Germany; 'but I have no respect for German literature or philosophy.' 'Your ladyship had better stay at home. Does your ladyship know anything about them?' was my ungallant reply. Robinson adds:—"I saw her once or twice after this, but I never courted her company; and I thought the giving her a pension one of the grossest misapplications of the small sum at the disposal of the Government."

The year 1827 saw the production of 'The O'Briens and the O'Flaherties,' a tale in which Lady Morgan attempted to bend the bow of Sir Walter Scott, and enter the domain of historical romance. The scene, of course, is Ireland; and the time, the years of unrest and discontent which led to the rebellion of 1798. The story is not a success; partly, perhaps, because it was written with a purpose, and the writer's political bias is much too conspicuous. In 1830, her indefatigable pen produced a second book on France, which seemed to exist in order that Lady Morgan might write upon it. We own that this second book is cleverly and smartly written; that it contains many lively descriptions; and just criticisms on men and things. The chapter

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headed 'Mornings at Paris' is certainly amusing. "Names appear on each page with a personal sketch or a *mot*, which makes the reader at once of their society. There is a visit to Béranger in the prison of La Force; and there are two memorable dinners, one at the Comte de Segur's, with a record of the conversation as fresh and as amusing as if it were not on topics half a century old; the other is a dinner at Baron Rothschild's, dressed by the great Carême, who had erected a column of the most ingenious confectionery architecture, on which he had inscribed Lady Morgan's name in spun sugar. Very complimentary, but, unfortunately, sadly prophetic. It is only upon *spun sugar* that Lady Morgan's name was inscribed by herself or others, and hence it is being rapidly forgotten.

Until the year 1836, Sir Charles and Lady Morgan resided in Dublin. They visited France and Italy, as we have seen; they figured every year in London Society; but Dublin still remained their home. Both were engaged in the advocacy of Roman Catholic emancipation. Sir Charles gave his services to the Association formed to secure this measure of justice; Lady Morgan lent her pen. The patriotic spirit and Irish exaltation of her novels ensured her the applause

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of her countrymen; when she went to the theatres she was received with an ovation; Daniel O'Connell eulogized her in public. All this made Dublin very pleasant to her. Her life in Kildare Street was crowned with success, literary and social. Her guests were the most distinguished Irishmen of the day; and the rank, beauty, and intellect of Dublin assembled regularly at her reunions. The poor in the street loaded her with compliments and benedictions. She records, by the way, a blessing she received from an old beggar woman, to whom she had given a sixpence:—"Och then! the Lord bless yer sweet honour, and may every hair of yer head be a mould four, to light yer sowl to glory!"

But having received a pension of £300 a year from Government—it is difficult to understand for what reason—Lady Morgan removed in 1834 to London, where she and her husband took up their residence near Hyde Park. In the same year she published her novel of 'The Princess,' written with the view of interesting the public in the new kingdom of Belgium, and containing some picturesque sketches of Brussels. She published also 'Dramatic Sketches from Real Life'; and in 1840, 'Woman and Her Master,' which, with 'The Book without a Name,' written in

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conjunction with Sir Charles Morgan, complete the list of her more important literary productions. In 1843 Sir Charles died. His clever wife, retaining to the last her vivacity and animal spirits, survived him sixteen years, and relished Society as keenly as in her younger days, though afflicted by a failure of sight. Mrs. S. C. Hall draws the following picture of her in her old age:—

"The last time we saw the Wild Irish Girl, she was seated on a couch in her bedroom, as pretty and picturesque a view of old lady womankind as ever we looked upon; her black silk dressing-gown fell around her *petite* form, which seemed so fragile that we feared to see her move. We recalled to memory Maria Edgeworth, having believed her to be the smallest great woman in the world, but Lady Morgan seemed not half her size. Yet her head looked as noble as ever; the lines of her face had deepened, but her large, luminous eyes were bright and glistening, her voice was clear and firm, her manners subdued; she was not at all restless, but spoke with confidence of arranging her antobiography, of which she had sent forth a little portion as an *avant courier*. After some kind remarks, she gave voice to one or two little sarcasms, that showed her acuteness

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was undiminished; but the hour flew swiftly and harmoniously; we promised to come some evening soon, and rejoiced her maid by saying that, though her ladyship was changed, she looked much better than we expected. We heard, what we know to be the case, that Lady Morgan, during her illness, and indeed always to her servants, was the most patient and gentle of mistresses. An unamiable woman could not have been beloved as she was by all around her."

"Unamiable," she certainly was not. All her sympathies were generous; and great as was her love of social notoriety she preserved to the last her kindness of heart and independence of character. She was incapable of toadying *persons*; indeed, her nature was almost too aggressive. Had she cared less for Society and its most sweet voices she would have been a better writer and a nobler woman; but she was not insensible to high aspirations, and not infrequently she indulged them. Her career proves that a Woman of Fashion cannot also be, at least in any elevated and useful sense, a Woman of Letters. She gave up to "the world" what was meant for mankind, and with the usual result; a temporary reputation, a fugitive fame, and a conviction on the

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part of those who have studied her and her works that she might have done better if she would; that culture and meditation would have developed her powers, and enabled her to achieve something of permanent value. The sparkle and liveliness of 'Glorvina' were undoubtedly a gain to a Society which is always dull and weary, and in want of external stimulus; but in proportion as Society gained Literature lost, for we cannot serve two masters, and it is very rarely that literary and social success can be achieved by the same individual.

Let us now glean a few passages from her Diary and Letters. Here is one in which we are introduced to names of note:—

"Last night we proceeded to Mrs. Skinner's, Portland Place, *ou, par exemple*, Parnassus and Port Royal; the Sorbonne and the Antiquarian Society; a quadrille. I was the lioness of the night, *malgré moi!* and there I sat, couched in a sort of bay-window, and there was presented to me all manner of notabilities, and scores of people from all corners of the earth. Amongst others Mrs. Somerville, the mathematician, all celestial and descended from her solar system, the learned commentator of La Place! and

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Miss Herschel, member of the Royal Society. Mrs. Somerville struck me to be a simple little woman, middle-aged. Had she not been presented to me by name and reputation, I should say one of the respectable twaddling chaperones one meets with at every ball, dressed in a snug mulberry velvet gown and little cap with a red flower. I asked her how she could descend from the stars to mix amongst us? She said she was obliged to go out with her daughter (who was dancing with my niece in the same quadrille). From the glimpse of her last night, I should say there was no imagination, no dry moral philosophy, though a deal of scientific lore and a great deal of *bonhomie*. She had long wished to know me, and I replied, with great truth, I had long revered her, without presuming to appreciate her! . . . .

"Then up comes Bob Montgomery, the poet, he bows to the ground, a handsome little black man. I asked him if he was *Satan* Montgomery? and he said he was, so we began to be very facetious."

Then follow references to Godwin, the author of 'Caleb Williams'; David Urquhart, Lord Palmerston's antagonist, and the well-known Russo-

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phobist; and Sidney Smith:—"I sat beside one of the greatest wits of the day, Sidney Smith! what a charmer! so natural, so little of a wit *titré*, so *bon enfant*, that the delicacy of his wit appears the natural result of a fine organization, and of a happy mind ready to enjoy and to receive as much pleasure from others as he confers upon those with whom he converses."

"Last night at Lady Stepney's—[the authoress of one or two commonplace novels]—met the Milmans, Lady Charlotte Bury, Mrs. Norton, Rogers, Sidney Smith, and other wits and authors. Amongst others, poor dear Jane Porter; she told me she was taken for me the other night, and talked to *as such* by a party of Americans! She is tall, lank and lean, and lackadaisical, dressed in the deepest black with rather a battered black gauze hat, and an air of a regular Melpomene. I am the reverse of all this, *et, sans vanité*, the best dressed woman wherever I go. Last night I wore a blue satin, trimmed fully with magnificent point lace and stomacher, *à la Sévigné*, light blue velvet hat and feather, with an *aigrette* of sapphires and diamonds! *Voilà!*"

It must be confessed that this was pretty well for the daughter of Robert Owenson, the whilom

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governess, and the dependant on Lady Abercorn. Literature had not proved a bad investment for Lady Morgan.

About Thomas Moore, the great little poet, the most prosaic and narrow-minded of all who ever called themselves lyrists :—

"Moore dined with us. We were only *en famille* with the addition of Mr. Reynolds Solly. Moore looks very old and bald, but still retains his cock-sparrow air. He was very pleasant; but rather egotistical and shallow. He declaimed against the spread of knowledge and the diffusion of cheap literature, as destructive to wit and talent of the highest order; pronounced that the throwing open of high and royal society would leave no play for all those epigrammatic touches and charming literary effusions (in which he by the bye excels); above all, he said the unclassical and uneducated people meddling with literature (Gad-a-mercy fellow!) and the *dilettanteisms* of the age, were destroying genius. I said, 'But if the greater number are to be the happier, the wiser, and the better for this spread of knowledge, the goal of all human effort and labour is obtained?' with many other things that seemed to strike him as new.

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"After dinner, he sighed and said, 'I walked through the streets of Dublin all day, and not a human being knew me. I suppose they will, before the week is over.' He exclaimed bitterly against writing-women, even against the beautiful Mrs. Norton. 'In short,' said he, 'a writing-woman is one unsexed;' but suddenly recollecting himself, and pointing at me, said, 'except her,' (me), whom, in all his works, he had passed over in silence."

Of the numerous English actresses who have risen to a high social position, through their talents or their charms, Miss O'Neil was not the least distinguished. Here is an entry referring to her :—

"Lady Beecher has been very kind in coming to me; the once celebrated Miss O'Neil—the 'Juliet' of admiring thousands. When she was a poor, obscure young actress, I saw her by chance as Bellinda, in 'All in the Wrong,' and afterwards in a suit of armour, dressed as an Amazon, as the heroine in 'Timour the Tartar.' I sought her out, and asked her to a party the next evening, and predicted her future triumph. Shortly after I followed her triumphant success in London. She is passing through Dublin on her way to see her old mother. She

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comes every day to see me while she stays here. The poetry of her own voice remains; it is still Juliet's voice in the balcony; but all else that was poetical in her beauty is gone. She is now a thin, elegant-looking lady; but no beauty, except that she has the indestructible beauty of goodness."

An anecdote of the Queen, in the first year of her reign, will interest the reader :—

"She [Mrs. Dawson Damer, of some repute as an amateur sculptress], told me that she was at the Duchess of Gloucester's, the other night,—a child's ball. The young Queen was there, looking quite a child herself. When her uncle, the Duke of Sussex, was leaving the room, she ran after him and said, 'Won't you give me a kiss before you go?' and then whispered in his ear, 'You have forgotten to wish mamma good night.'"

'Lady Morgan's Diary and Correspondence,' as edited by Mr. Hepworth Dixon, are, however, so easily accessible, that it is unnecessary to make any further quotations. Our object simply is, to show her as she drew herself, with all her liveliness, and quickness of observation, and ready enjoyment of life. In her journals she is always natural,—and throws aside that

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exaggeration and effort which spoil her published works. It is interesting to note her literary criticisms; they demonstrate the extreme narrowness of her mind and the superficiality of her culture. Thus, of Gerald Griffin's fine novel, 'The Collegians,' she can say no more than that it is "good, but coarse." And of Charlotte Brontë's 'Shirley,' that "it is high-flown and the talent factitious. (!) Great force of style, great feebleness of action, incoherent in its working out, but original in its thinking." Poor Lady Morgan! When the very names of her novels shall have ceased to be remembered, critics will still be discussing the weird power and unique realism of Charlotte Brontë. There is more of the passionate life of genius in one page of 'Shirley' than in all the fictions, Glorvinas, O'Donnels, Florence Macarthys and the like, with which Lady Morgan tickled the degenerate taste of an idle public. The two women stand at opposite poles; in character as in intellect; in their sympathies as in their careers. Lady Morgan could not have endured for even a month the grim seclusion of Haworth Rectory, and the silence of the Yorkshire moorland; but then she could not have written 'Jane Eyre.' But who would not rather have been the author of Charlotte Brontë's three great romances than the gay and sparkling

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Woman of Fashion? With Leigh Hunt's good-humoured criticism of 'The Wild Irish Girl' (she loved to keep up this character to the last):—

> "And dear Lady Morgan, see see, when she comes,
> With her pulses all beating for freedom like drums;
> So Irish, so modish, so *mixtish*, so wild;
> So committing herself as she talks—like a child,
> So trim, yet so easy—polite, yet high-hearted,
> That Truth and she, try all she can, won't be parted;
> She'll put you your fashions, your latest new air,
> And then talk so frankly, she'll make you all stare" . . . .

—with this pleasant banter we may contrast the splendid praise which another and a greater poet, Mr. Swinburne, has poured out in honour of the author of 'Jane Eyre.'

Worldly to the last, as the cynic would say,—social in her tastes, as a more friendly judge may put it,—Lady Morgan continued to mix in London Society while, one by one, her old friends passed away, the old friends who had flattered and admired her, and a new generation sprung up around her, whose literary standard was higher, their sympathies being called forth and their tastes cultivated by Dickens, and Thackeray, and Bulwer Lytton in his later and better style. It is a painful thing, surely, for an author to see her

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books dropping into oblivion while she still lingers on the stage; to find new idols usurping the homage of the circulating libraries; and new heroes gathering the suffrages of the world of readers. An author cannot abdicate. There he must sit till Death removes him; a king without a sceptre, without a crown, without subjects. He assists as it were at his own funeral; sees with his own eyes the approach of that oblivion which has engulfed so much that the public once prized and belauded. Yes; no fate can be sadder than that of the writer who has outlived his or her popularity; and in 1855 few were left of the admirers of Lady Morgan in 1830. She does not seem to have cared much for this first instance of "mundane instability." She had an inexhaustible fund of animal spirits, which bore her up against the ingratitude of the public and the ailments of old age. Sad thoughts she could not altogether crush out, but she strove against them with all her old bravery. There is something to us very pathetic in such entries as these:—

"Poor Charles Kemble!—I know the whole dynasty of the Kembles, from King John downwards; Charles was the last and best of the whole stock—

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beautiful, graceful, gallant, and a very fine gentleman; such he was when I first knew him.

"*July.*—Silvio Pellico is dead.

"During our delightful residence on the Lake of Como, the Villa Fontana was frequented by some of the most illustrious men in Lombardy. Conjalionieri, Count Porro, Count Pecchio, and the charming women of their family. Silvio Pellico was the delight of all; he was then all poetry. . . .

"*September* 2.—Moore Park. I have an obituary already. Abbott Lawrence, my most kind and hospitable host, is gone. Poor old Colburn gone too—my brilliant advertiser and publisher of thirty years! one who could not take his tea without a stratagem. . . .

"Another death!—General Pepe is dead at Turin, at the age of seventy-two—one of the noblest men in the contemporary history of modern Italy."

And so the dreary record ran on; and the end drew nearer and nearer. In 1858 she suffered from two attacks of bronchitis, but with characteristic elasticity of frame threw them both off, and celebrated Christmas Day, which was also her birthday, with all her natural brightness. "She assembled," says her biographer, "a few of her old friends at dinner, and did the honours with the *verve* and brilliancy of her brightest days. She

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told stories and anecdotes with delicate finesse and drollery; and after dinner she sang a comic song, because, as she said, being written by a Church dignitary [Dr. Burroughes], it could be nothing but good words; so she sang 'The Night before Larry was Stretched' in a style that was inimitable. At her age 'many happy returns of the day' could not be looked for; but none of those then with her felt it too sanguine to look forward to at least '*one* cheer more'; but this Christmas Day proved to be the very last."

There may be some readers who will think that an octogenarian might have spent her Christmas Day somewhat differently. But it was hardly a misfortune for Lady Morgan that, though she had survived her relatives and her earlier friends, she had not survived her light-heartedness. She was certainly a "wonderful old woman," as wonderful in her way as Lord Palmerston or Thiers in his, for undiminished vitality and capability of hard work to the end. She had resumed her literary labours with fresh enthusiasm, and New Year's Day, 1859, witnessed the publication of the child of her old age, her 'Odd Volume.' Such unflagging energy was due, no doubt, to her animal spirits. She had had her sorrows, but they had left

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no deep traces on her happy nature. And, for the rest, her life on the whole had been singularly favoured by fortune. She had achieved great social and literary success. She had enjoyed "the best of company." And for upwards of twenty years a liberal pension had relieved her from the necessity of work and the burden of pecuniary care. Her pen had not been idle, it is true; but she had written with the knowledge that she could write or not as she chose. Hence she had escaped the corroding anxieties which sap the physical as well as the intellectual forces of the professional author. Still we cannot withhold our admiration—scarcely our envy—from such a picture as the following:—

"After working all the morning, from the moment she awoke to two in the afternoon—her dinner hour—and sending the friend who worked with her, home, completely tired out, Lady Morgan dressed for the day, and seated herself on her small green sofa in the drawing-room, as fresh as a lark, ready to receive visitors, to tell and to hear the newest gossip of the day, and she frequently had a large party in the evening, till she retired at last, declaring 'she was dead.'"

Her last letter, at least the last she wrote with her

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own hand, may be given in illustration of the vivaciousness and gaiety of Lady Morgan at the age of 81 or 82. It was addressed to Lady Combermere:—

"DEAREST LADY,—Be all that constitute a merry Christmas and happy new year laid at your feet for your gracious acceptance, if you please to accept such 'tag rag and bob tail,' the rubbish of times old and monastic. I only wish I could lay myself on a sofa beside you. That charming *commèrage* which only you know how to sustain! I will not dwell on the recent melancholy events of this season of sorrow, carried on in the midst of storms and fogs, of mists and misery, with death waylaying the young and beautiful, the loving and loved, the happy and prosperous; but it is wonderful in calamity! Of the many distinguished men who gathered round my supposed *death-bed last year*, three have already gone before me! I am getting so blind I must stop.

"Well; my life-wearing task is done—my book, I believe, ready for publication; but why not published I know not; its title is impertinently changed by Bentley. Miss Jewsbury is gone into the bosom of her family! *chemin faisant* to the glories of the Combermere Abbey, Mrs. Jones off to hers, and I am (or have been) 'left and abandoned by

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my velvet friends,' to a degree unexampled in the history of human vicissitudes. London is a desert,—

'Silent, oh! Moyle, is the roar of thy water,'

and I am literally left 'the last woman,' looking out in vain for the last man! At last he turns up! It is the Duke of Wellington, on his way from Strathfieldsay to Windsor; others drop in, and so the sun shines upon me again; and now I await some occurrence to conclude this dull note. Yours, dear Lady Combermere, with my most respectful regards to the Field Marshal *de cœur et de corps*,

"SYDNEY MORGAN."

A musical morning party on March 17th, St. Patrick's Day, at which were assembled the leaders of London Society, proved to be Lady Morgan's not inappropriate farewell to the world of fashion. A week later she caught cold, and though at first the symptoms did not appear grave, her cough and breathing gradually became troublesome. Still, her recuperative energy had always proved so great that her medical attendants did not apprehend a fatal result; and on the morning of the 16th of April, she seemed and felt so much better that she called for writing

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materials, and began a letter on business. Her bodily strength, however, proved unequal to the task, and she laid aside her pen for ever. Spasmodic attacks came on; her weakness increased; she spoke and breathed with difficulty; and in the evening she passed away, making a peaceful end.

Her remains were interred in the Brompton cemetery, and their resting-place is indicated by a tomb, designed and executed by Mr. Westmacott.

Such is the story of the life of Lady Morgan; a woman who in the worlds of Fashion and of Letters held for many years an unique though not a great position.

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MISS BERRY.

I.

It is difficult to define the characteristics which ensure to women a successful social career. Mere personal charms will not avail, for though the Gunnings won titled husbands and attracted crowds of admirers, they never exercised any influence upon society. Nor is there any wonder-working power in genius, for even Harriet Martineau never attained to the position of a social leader. It seems necessary that a woman who would be one must possess a certain quickness of intellect, a ready insight into foibles and failings, and a promptness and liveliness of reply, which will enable her to hold her own against all comers; but far more essential is that grace of manner which insensibly conciliates and fascinates, and that fertility of resource which is equal to every occasion. It is true that Lady

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Holland was imperious and uncourteous, but then her sway as a woman of fashion was upheld to a large extent by her political surroundings. But it will be found that most of our Queens of Society have been endowed with the qualities to which we have adverted, and that whatever else they have been or have wanted, they have known how to disarm a foe by a pleasing smile and secure a friend by an opportune word.

Miss Berry—or rather the Berrys, for the two sisters can no more be divided in the biographer's pages than they were in their lives—owed their long social celebrity, however, to no such special qualifications. The Berrys were neither handsome nor witty. They were not distinguished by any spell of manner. They had no claim of rank or wealth. They were not enriched with any remarkable intellectual gifts. And yet for half a century or more they were eagerly welcomed in the best circles of English Society. They saw everything and knew everybody. They received the confidence of princesses, wits, statesmen, diplomatists, and men of letters. It is much to the credit of English Society that it was so; that these two quiet, gentle, homely, cultured women could draw to their modest home in Curzon

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Street all whom men most admired and women most loved. Speaking of the elder sister, Lord Houghton says:—"Good nature and good sense were really all that could be predicated of the substance of her usual talk, but in the manner of it there was a cheerful appreciation of all that was said or done, which gave encouragement to the shiest—an appeal to any wit or wisdom the room might hold to come out and show itself, which was rarely unheard,—and a simplicity which dispersed by its contact all insolence or assumption. Add to this the knowledge and the interest acquired by an acute observation, and a retentive memory through an unusually long and varied life, and you have a combination all the more agreeable from its absence of the marvellous or the sublime." Here, then, we have the secret of her popularity: she could listen, she could accommodate herself to others, she was always ready to give place to her neighbour, while her talent and knowledge were sufficiently conspicuous to render this self-abnegation a compliment. For we are not sensible of any pleasure when a person yields to us whom we know to be decidedly our inferior. There is no flattery in the bow of one's valet. Miss Berry pleased because she never thought of herself.

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Her conversation was neither brilliant nor profound, but it was always good-humoured. She made no enemies because she was never anxious to display her wit; nobody left her house with the fear that he or she would immediately be offered up on the altar of a satirist's vanity. Her successful social career goes far to rehabilitate good nature, which is generally regarded as a plebeian's virtue, in the public esteem. It shows that spitefulness is not the only, nor the best policy.

Mary and Agnes Berry were the daughters of a gentleman of good family, who settled in Yorkshire towards the close of the eighteenth century. Their early life was darkened by the cloud of genteel poverty. At one time Mr. Berry flourished as the supposed heir of a wealthy Scotch uncle, but he was ousted from his favour by "a more active and less scrupulous brother." Of Mrs. Berry we can learn nothing, except that she often prayed her children might possess a vigorous character; from which prayer we may infer that she was a woman of strong sense and some individuality. Nor is any information to be obtained respecting the manner in which the Berrys were educated. They must have had good advisers, and their natural capabilities

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must have been great, for when an improvement in the family's circumstances enabled them, in 1783, to make a tour on the Continent, they had acquired a very unusual degree of cultivation. "A sufficient command of the Latin classics to give a scholarly turn to their knowledge, without a taint of pedantry; a familiarity with the French tongue, which throughout life made the society of foreigners as easy to them as that of their countrymen; a thorough understanding of their own language and literature, as exhibited in its best and purest models, which shone in all their conversation, and enabled them in mature years to express themselves on paper in a forcible, judicious, and graceful style; an adequate study of the principles of Art, combined with a fair facility of practice — these were the results of the self-culture which the Misses Berry acquired in a remote provincial home, and which they might well have regarded through the long vista of years, not with the bitter remembrances of toil, effort, and privation, but with a legitimate pride in the conquests of talents and will over adverse fortunes, and with a grateful consciousness of the mental faculties that could do so much for themselves, and needed so little obligation to others." It is not of many

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young ladies of twenty that so much can be said nowadays, notwithstanding our improved educational appliances.

Miss Mary Berry kept a journal during her long tour, and a very interesting one it is. From its lively pages we learn that she and her sister gained easy access to the best company, and were introduced to the most distinguished men and women of the age. But that age, an age of powder and ruffles! How wide and deep seems the gulf which separates us from it! Less than a century ago as runs the record of the years, and yet several centuries ago if we estimate all that has since been accomplished, and take note of the wonderful progress the world has made. It seems strange to read of M. de Staël and his marriage with Mademoiselle Necker, afterwards the brilliant author of 'Corinne;' of men and things in France when the Monarchy was trembling on the verge of the Revolution; of Society and manners in Europe, before the exclusivness of aristocratic feudalism had been broken up. Young as the diarist was she observed with accuracy, and knew how to express the result of her observations in language clear and concise. Her descriptions are remarkable for their faithfulness, and her judgments for their soberness and good sense.

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Soon after their return to England in 1788 Miss Berry made the acquaintance of Horace Walpole, "the finest of fine gentlemen and fine writers,"—most epigrammatic of scandal-mongers, most selfish of coxcombs,—a man with a good deal of taste and a great deal of ill-nature. His intimacy with Miss Berry is, perhaps, the finest episode in his selfish life, and goes far to contradict the generally received opinion that he had no heart. It is eminently characteristic of him, however, and of his way of looking at life, that he spoke of Mary's face as "formed for a sentimental novel, but ten times fitter for a fifty times better thing—genteel comedy." It is possible and probable that Walpole was all the better for the society and conversation of the gentle, pure-minded, and amiable Berrys. They must have had some effect on the acidity of his temperament, and we can fancy that they often extracted the sting from his speech, and taught him to criticise his fellows with less asperity. On the other hand, he was unquestionably of great advantage to the social position of the Berrys. His friendship was a *passe partout* which admitted them to the best English "interiors." *His* friends became *their* friends; and it may be added that *his* likes and dislikes became, in no small degree, *their* likes and dislikes. We hold,

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however, that the benefit was chiefly on Walpole's side. He could not fail to profit by their good sense, and their right-mindedness, as well as by their knowledge of foreign manners and foreign literature. He affected to make no distinction between the sisters; yet we may suppose that he leaned a little towards the elder, as it was with her his name was connected in a newspaper paragraph, shortly after his succession to the earldom of Orford. Horace Walpole, however, had too keen a sense of the absurd, and too great a dread of the satirist, to play the part of the aged lover; and between him and Miss Berry no other feelings prevailed than those of mutual attachment and esteem. On the occasion of the sisters' second visit to the Continent in 1790, he wrote to them playfully but honestly:—"I pique myself on no other philosophy but what a long use and knowledge of the world has given me—the philosophy of indifference to most persons and events. I do pique myself on not being ridiculous at this very late period of my life; but when there is not a grain of passion in my affection for you two, and when you both have the good sense not to be displeased at my telling you so (though I hope you would have despised me for the

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contrary), I am not ashamed to say your loss is heavy to me."

It is true that Miss Berry's friends persisted in believing that the aged Lord had offered her a share of his coronet and estates; and the story ran that the Duchess of Gloucester had frequently inquired of him, "When am I to call Miss Berry aunt?" receiving always the same reply, "Whenever Miss Berry pleases." It was undoubtedly a fond invention. As Lord Houghton points out, no trace can be found in her papers of any proposal of the kind; and Walpole's sensitive Mrs. Grundyism, his timid fear of the opinion of the little world which bulked so greatly in his estimation, his slavery to conventionalities, were quite sufficient to dissuade him from a step that could not fail to have provoked the murmur of many tongues and to have sharpened the pens of many satirists. It may be conceded that rather than have lost the society he valued so dearly, he would have endeavoured to nerve himself to the feat of soliciting the hand of one of the sisters. But it is evident that he liked and respected Agnes chiefly because she was Mary's sister; his addresses would therefore have been paid to Mary, and by Mary they would have been rejected, for the sufficient reason that she had

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already loved and loved in vain, and that she was too true a woman to have married when she could not give even the semblance of affection.

Mary Berry's love-story was one of those romances which sometimes raise our ordinary lives above the level of the commonplace. When or where she first met General O'Hara is unknown; but his name occurs in her journal in May, 1789, when she was on a visit to Rome. But already some love-passages had taken place between them of which Horace Walpole became cognizant, for the latter, writing in 1790, tells her that some one has been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Gibraltar instead of her friend, General O'Hara, and expresses his regret if he, and she through him, should be mortified thereat. In 1791 he writes that O'Hara has arrived in London, and that she would love him better than ever, alluding humorously to his personal characteristics, for O'Hara was not only a dashing soldier but a handsome man. In 1793 he is "made Governor of Toulon," which a British force then held for the exiled Bourbon King of France. In the siege which followed, the siege which drew attention to Napoleon's military genius, he was wounded and taken prisoner. With a halo of glory around him he returned to England in

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1795, and joined the Berrys at Cheltenham, where the long acquaintance between him and Mary was ratified, as it were, by a formal engagement. On O'Hara's promotion to the governorship of Gibraltar in 1796, he pressed Miss Berry to consent to an immediate marriage in order that she might accompany him to his new scene of duty. Out of what seems to have been an almost Quixotic consideration for others, she declined the offer, and by so doing wrecked the happiness of her life. No doubt she and the General would have lived together on the most harmonious terms as wife and husband; but his affection succumbed to other influences when he was no longer under the spell of her presence; he broke off the engagement, feeling perhaps a little piqued by a self-sacrifice which, not being made on his own behalf, he failed to appreciate.

She felt the blow deeply. To an intimate friend she wrote:—

"Do not suppose this long period of mental and bodily suffering has been lost upon me. I have communed much with myself in my own chamber. I have reflected, and seriously reflected, that, however little I have hitherto enjoyed, and much I have suffered in life from the circumstances in which I have

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been placed being quite inappropriate to my situation, and still that a being endowed by nature with a sound understanding, possessing a cultivated mind, and a warmly affectionate heart, cannot be intended for unhappiness,—nay, can never be permanently unhappy but for its own fault; and that, with a conscience as clear as mine, it will indeed be my own fault if I do not make my future life less uncomfortable than my past."

And again:—

"After a twelvemonth passed in the most painful, agitating, and unavoidable suspense, I find myself not only totally disappointed in a plan of happiness, founded on the most moderate desires, and pursued by the most rational means, but obliged to change my opinion of one of the characters in the world of which I had ever thought the highest, and in whose known truth and affection I have even had the most entire confidence and the sincerest satisfaction long before I considered him in any other light than that of a friend. I shall not dwell on the effect which you will easily guess all this must have had on a heart as warm and as *little generally* confiding as mine, but a heart which, when once it trusts, trusts so implicitly."

What we know of O'Hara from other sources leads us to wonder that he had attracted so powerfully the

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affection of Mary Berry, with her quiet good sense, her deep religious convictions, and her cultivated literary tastes. He was considerably older than she was, but a man of rare personal gifts; a soldier, with a soldier's vices; a man by no means well read, but with much fascination of manner and a certain charm of conversation. It is not less wonderful that she should have attracted *him*. One hears a good deal in Goethe and Goethe's imitators of "Elective Affinities," but surely something may be said for the power of Contrasts?

Women possess a remarkable idealising faculty, and, all unconsciously, convert a lay figure into a hero. In the following sketch of O'Hara, it is evident that love has guided the pen, and that it is the heart rather than the mind which has inspired the writer's estimate of his character. "I have heard him," she writes, "called too *exigeant* and *worriting* by idle officers under his command, and too bold by the ministerial people here, after the failure at Toulon; but in my life I never heard an allegation against either his heart or his understanding; and if I had, I should not have believed it, because in a long acquaintance I have myself *known* and *seen* repeated proofs of the excellence of both. Instead of not know-

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ing 'any real virtues' he possesses until this unfortunate affair, in which I am still convinced his head and not his heart is to blame, I know nobody whose character united so many manly virtues. It was this, joined to a knowledge of his conduct in all the relations of life in which he then stood, that 'entitled him to the love and approbation of such a heart' as mine; and I felt and know he decidedly 'suited me as a friend,' because to an excellent understanding, great natural quickness, and much knowledge of the world, he joined an affectionate tenderness of heart which had always inspired me with a degree of confidence and intimacy you have often heard me say I hardly *ever* felt with *any* other person."

A few months more, and another affliction fell upon Miss Berry, the death of her friend Lord Orford, which took place on the 2nd of March, 1797. By his will he left Little Strawberry Hill to the Miss Berrys, and certain MSS. were made over to them and Mr. Berry, with instructions that the latter should undertake a new edition of his works, in which these papers should be included. This trust was fulfilled in 1799; but though the new edition bears the name of Mr. Berry, there is good reason to believe that it

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was chiefly prepared by his accomplished elder daughter.

Settling at Little Strawberry they soon drew around them a brilliant circle of friends and acquaintances, all of whom were pleasantly united either by their love or pursuit of letters. From Miss Berry's correspondence we gather some glimpses of the tone of the society and the character of the occupations she affected. Thus she writes to Mr. Greathead :—"I am anxious to hear if Bertie has yet met with Matilda Pottingen, and if he writes odes upon her in the style of Ruggiero [an allusion to Canning's famous ballad in his burlesque of 'The Rovers']. I know Lysons [the antiquary and topographer] sent you the *Anti-Jacobin*, and, in spite of its title, I am sure you would be diverted with the excellent laughable criticism upon German plays—such, I mean, as we ignoramuses see them through the medium of bad translations."

Again :—"The parson . . . stayed till yesterday. He is a very good scholar, and has been much in the habit of teaching. He corrected a piece of Isocrates which I had done by myself, and then read on with me in the same oration, and whilst he was here I translated above two pages more, writing them down, I mean, and all the verbs and their parts in the oppo-

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site page . . . I find that about six months' regular tho' moderate study would really make me a sufficient Grecian for my purpose, that of mere enjoyment."

It may be doubted whether, even in these days of high-pressure education, many ladies study Greek for "mere enjoyment," and few of those who do can read, we suspect, the orations of Isocrates!

Again:—"Don't let me forget to advise you to read the 'Natural Son, or Lovers' Vows'; it is the entire and literal translation of the play ['Lovers' Vows,' adapted by Richard Cumberland, from the German of Kotzebue], which is now acting with such success at Covent Garden, but *not* as it is acted . . . I think it quite charming, and it affected me much, tho' not of the black and dreadful school of Schiller . . . Another book which I read was the 'Essay on Population.'" This was the once-famous work of Malthus, which even to this day retains a few admirers, though its political economy is of the feeblest.

In another letter we find a reference to Montaigne's Essays, as "a very curious and an *astonishing* book, considering the times in which it was written." She speaks also of having read Condorcet's 'Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrés de l'Esprit Humain.'

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Here are a couple of bits of criticism. They are not very profound, but they show that Miss Berry read widely, and read carefully, so as to form an independent judgment on what she read. Of Sterne's great masterpiece she says :—

"'Tristram Shandy,' while it diverts, always reminds me of a Dutch portrait, in which we admire the accurate representation of all the little disgusting blemishes — the warts, moles, and hairs — of the human form. Even when he affects us, it is by a minute detail of little circumstances which all lead to the weaknesses, and are often connected with the ridicules, that belong to our nature; while Rousseau, on the contrary, like the great masters of the Italian school of painting, gives grace and dignity to every character he brings forward — choosing to represent scenes and situations where every ennobling faculty of our mind is brought into action, and the greatest expression of passion and character is produced, without even losing sight of decent grace, or presenting anything disgusting to the imagination."

In reference to Milton :—

"When I read 'Paradise Lost,' I am no more able to conceive the powers of imagination and genius, exerted by Milton in the composition of that poem,

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than I am able to conceive the intellect of Sir Isaac Newton in the demonstration of the phenomenon of the universe. Both seem to me beings more exalted above myself in the scale of intellectual perfection, than I am above the brute creation. Both serve, more than any other contemplation of nature, to raise and purify my ideas of its great Author—of that Being who has powers to delegate *such* powers! such emanations of *something* so purely spiritual! so clearly detached from all corporal properties and all animal analogies!

"Mr. Knight surprised me much the other day by his sentiments of Milton's poetry; I mean, of Milton's poetry in his 'Paradise Lost.' That even the finest parts of that poem, while he admired them, should rather oppress and sink him, than exalt to that sort of enthusiasm and rapture, the true end and aim of all really fine poetry, I cannot understand in a man of his admirable taste and classical acquirements. The perfect taste, the delicacy, the divine purity of all the descriptions of Paradise, of Adam and Eve—of their happiness, their lives, etc. etc.,—*he* thinks cold and unanimating, and admires most the descriptions of Satan and the diabolic part of the poem.

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"Here, again, I much wonder at, and differ from him. Nothing indeed can be more impressive, more dignified, grander, or more consistent, than the character and conduct of Satan and his compeers throughout; but I must ever think such a character, and the conduct and descriptions incident to it, less original, less infinitely difficult, as to the effect produced by them, than the exquisite pictures of Paradise and its inhabitants, before their fallen state. To represent scenes which interest, of uninterrupted happiness, without events, without distress, without incident of any kind, and, above all, to represent love—the enjoyments of happy, gratified, *human* love—without grossness, without satiety, and with a purity both of thought and of expression, for which he could have neither prototype nor example, seems to me one of the greatest possible efforts of the magic powers of true poetry, which may indeed be said, in the instance of Milton, to have formed a creation of its own."

One more extract:—

"Whatever recommends Lucretius to your notice, recommends a source of exquisite pleasure to your poetic mind; his metaphysics are naught, but his poetry is divine. Virgil shrinks into *prettiness* when-

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ever compared with him; but remember, he is supposed to have died the day Virgil was born; therefore he is less polished, less uniformly harmonious."

A lady who read Lucretius and Virgil, Montaigne and Condorcet,—who could translate Isocrates,—and appreciate both 'Tristram Shandy' and 'Paradise Lost,'—was certainly no ordinary woman!

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II.

In 1802, after the peace of Amiens, the Continent was once more thrown open to English tourists, and the Miss Berrys hastened to avail themselves of the delights of foreign travel. The elder sister, as usual, recorded in her journal the impressions produced upon her mind by all she saw and heard, and we owe to her a series of vivid pictures of the social life of Paris at the epoch of the Consulate. For the manners and character of the French she felt much of that almost angry contempt, which was common to even the most intelligent and highly educated Englishmen under the influences of the Revolution. But for the First Consul she had more indulgence. She took, indeed, what may be called a Whiggish view of his position. What think you, she writes, of the *man Buonaparte*, absolute King of France, quietly established in the Tuileries? "For my part I admire him, and think, if he can

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keep his place, he does his country a service." She held that it mattered nothing at all to England *who* governed France, so long as she was in a state to maintain the relations of peace, and the conditions of treaties. Therefore, she was able to judge Napoleon more dispassionately than even most of her contemporaries, and her descriptions consequently may be accepted as free from the exaggerations of prejudice.

She first saw the victor of Marengo at a grand review, but did not obtain a good view of him. All she could see was a little man, who sat his horse remarkably well, and had a sallow complexion, a "highish" nose, a very serious countenance, and cropped hair. He wore the dress of some infantry regiment, blue with a plain broad white lappel, and a plain hat with the very smallest of national cockades in it. Afterwards she saw him at a reception at the Tuileries. The Man of the Circle, she found very different from the Man of the Parade. He was in his undress consular uniform, but with silk stockings and small buckles. His dark hair, cropped much shorter than it appears on any of his busts, did not lie well or smoothly upon his head. His broad shoulders gave his figure importance, and he seemed taller

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than when on horseback. His complexion was pale and yellow, but not sickly; and his mouth when he was speaking, had a remarkable and uncommon expression of sweetness. Generally speaking, his countenance gave the impression rather of complacence and quiet intelligence, than of any decided penetration and strong expression whatever. His eyes were light grey, and he looked full in the face of the person to whom he spoke — "to me always a good sign," remarks Miss Berry. She adds that, notwithstanding the sweetness of his countenance, she could readily believe that it might be terrible and fire-darting when angry, or greatly moved by any cause.

She was introduced to Madame Récamier, one of the acknowledged queens of French Society, whom she describes as "*the* decided beauty of the *new* world, for if she can be called handsome, it is entirely a *figure de fantaisie.*" She had a clear complexion; was young, tall, dressed with much affectation of singularity in the extravagance of the mode; her manners were *doucereuses;* evidently she thought much of herself, and little about others, for she was not only a beauty, but professed to be a wit. Miss Berry also made the acquaintance of Monge, the author

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of several scientific works of repute, and of Laplace, the great astronomer. Other famous names flit across her pages; as those of Berthier, Moreau, Macdonald, Cambacères, the second Consul; Josephine, and Madame de Staël, afterwards one of her warmest friends. Of Parisian manners and morals she gives a most unfavourable account. On one occasion she went to a ball at the Cercle des Etrangers, and remarks thus of the *dress* and the *undress* of the women, and the appearance of the men, and indeed of the whole company: "Loads of finery in gold and silver, excessively fine laces, bare necks and shoulders more than halfway down the back, with the two blade-bones squeezed together in a very narrow-backed gown; arms covered with nothing but a piece of fine lace below the shoulder; and trains that never ended: in short, an endless variety of bad taste, without one single figure that one's eye could repose on with pleasure. Such were the women. As for the men, a general unsmartness of appearance pervaded them all."

On the 18th of April Miss Berry returned to London, and soon afterwards a comedy from her pen, entitled 'Fashionable Friends,' which had

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been privately performed at Strawberry Hill with considerable success, was produced at the Drury Lane Theatre. The cast was so strong that the play could hardly have failed of a favourable reception, had it possessed the slightest dramatic *vis*. Such actors as Charles Kemble, Barrymore, Suett, and King, with such actresses as Miss du Camp, Mrs. Young, Miss Pope, and Mrs. Jordan, were able to uphold a considerable burden; but they could not induce the public to accept 'Fashionable Friends,' though the prologue was written by William Robert Spencer, and the epilogue by the Hon. William Lamb. It ran only three nights. Miss Berry attributed the failure to a misconception respecting its authorship; but we suspect it was due to its inherent defects. The dialogue is clever and the plot not ill-conceived; but there is an entire absence of interest, and the situations are neither new nor forcible. A more serious fault, and one which we should hardly have expected to find in a play by Miss Berry, is the immoral tone. In this she probably did but reflect the society of her day; and no doubt she is careful that vice should eventually be punished. But the comedy reminds us of the modern productions of the French

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stage, and turns wholly and absolutely on the love-intrigues of married couples.

In October she and her sister were again on the Continent. They visited the south of France, Savoy, Switzerland, and Germany, and Miss Berry describes what they saw with her characteristic clearness. But we find nothing in her journal which calls for quotation. On her return to England she was fated to meet with a great affliction; the breaking-up of the engagement of her sister Agnes to Mr. Fergusson of Raith, and her sister's subsequent illness. These were the events of 1804. In the following year she paid a visit to Scotland, and for three months resided at Bothwell Castle, the picturesquely situated seat of Lord Douglas. From her journal for January 1806, we extract and condense her account of Nelson's public funeral.

[On the water, she says, it was a crowd of boats, in which the immense city barges only were conspicuous. It is much easier to set down upon paper the regulations of a ceremony, such as that the boats of the river fencibles are to line each side of the procession, than to give the effect of a procession so lined on the water in the foggy atmosphere of the Thames. The distance of time between the minute guns fired by these river fencibles was

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too long to command continued attention, and therefore, I think, failed in their effect. The music, too, was not sufficiently large to have any effect at all; and the barge which contained his honoured remains was neither sufficiently large nor sufficiently distinguished to command the eye and the attention of every spectator, which by some means or other it ought to have done.

On shore the whole ceremony was still less calculated to gratify the feelings it naturally inspired, and in which (to do them justice) not one of the thousands collected as spectators but seemed to participate. Never was there so decent, so quiet, so serious, so respectful a mob. Instead of presenting to their eager eyes the surviving heroes of Trafalgar, following the corpse of their illustrious leader, the naval officers were all put into mourning coaches, which immediately became equally uninteresting to the spectators, whether they contained a vice-admiral or a herald; indeed the heralds, from their dress, were the only conspicuous persons. The sailors, too, of the 'Victory,' the immediate witnesses of their Nelson's glory, who had indignantly opposed the idea of transferring his corpse to a frigate, and who had insisted on its remaining with them in the ship, on whose deck they had seen him fall—these sailors, instead of being allowed to surround the coffin from which they had proved themselves so unwilling to separate, were marshalled by themselves in another part of the procession, without music, without officers, without any naval accompaniments whatsoever. Although few in number, and thus separated from everything that would have added consequence to their appearance, such was the impression that their serious, quiet, decent deportment made on the

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multitude that they were repeatedly and almost continually cheered as they passed along . . .

I will not talk of the disproportions and perfect bad taste of the funeral car, because good taste in forms I never expect here; but I *did* expect sufficient good taste in moral feeling, not to have entrusted the conduct of such a ceremony, the tribute of such a nation to such a chief, as a job to the Herald's Office and their hireling undertakers! The only moment in which the mind the most disposed to enthusiasm could for a moment indulge it (I speak not of the ceremony in St. Paul's, which I did not see), was that in which the funeral car passed Charing Cross. Here nothing could be seen on every side but pyramids of heads, and every head uncovered from respect to the object, on which every eye was entirely bent. One general feeling pervading a great multitude must ever tend to the sublime.]

The shadow which hung over her sister's life, and the cloud which had settled down upon her own, did not fail to sadden her feelings, and awaken melancholy thoughts in her solitary home, when she was free from the distractions of society. Spring had no longer the old sweet freshness; summer ceased to awaken its former associations of joy and delight. What she was conscious of was a kind of tranquil regret. She had given up every animating hope; she saw nothing for which to strive or aspire; the future would bring her no great happiness, and no

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unendurable sorrow. After a heavy affliction the heart for a time lies crushed and despairing; but when it recovers a little from this utter abasement it learns to be content with the calm of resignation. Calm, because equally undisturbed by anticipation or anxiety. It was while in this condition that she found an amusement in composing the following epitaph for herself, nearly half a century before any such *Vale* was needed :—

"Beneath this Stone is deposited
The dust of one whom
Remarkable personal beauty,
Considerable superiority of intellect,
Singular quickness of the senses,
And the noblest endowments of the heart
Neither distinguished, served, nor
Rendered happy.
She was
Admired and neglected,
Beloved and mistaken,
Respected and insignificant.
She endured years of a useless existence,
Of which the happiest moment was that
In which her spirit returned to the bosom
Of an Almighty and Merciful
Creator."

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As Lord Houghton remarks, so sad a summary of life and character as this will seem incongruous with the successful woman of society, the cheerful host, the welcome guest, the friend and correspondent of so many personages distinguished in the worlds of politics and literature; will seem inconsistent with her ordinary good sense, her rectitude of principle, and her equanimity. Many will censure it as the offspring of exaggerated sensitiveness or womanly affectation. But one who knew her so well as Lord Houghton did, pronounces it just and true. To some extent its mournfulness might be ascribed to a physical depression under which she occasionally laboured; but, in fact, its spirit accords with her mood in all the graver moments of her life. She did not yield, however, to a fruitless melancholy. She turned aside from no innocent gaiety or healthy excitement. She abhorred all sentimentality, all unreal or undue emotion; and to such a degree did she carry her practical fortitude that it led casual or superficial observers to reproach her with want of heart.

The gloomy tranquillity, as well as the even balance of her mind, arose from her close observation of the vagueness and imperfectness of human life, which is always exciting desires it cannot satisfy, and creating

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conditions it cannot fulfil. "One chief disappointment naturally gathered round itself the floating atoms of dissatisfaction, and she imaged them as its consequence and production; but no circumstances would have altered her view of the world, unless indeed some uncongenial companionship had degraded her perceptions and damaged her intelligence. Her relations to General O'Hara had perhaps more of female instincts about them than she avowed to herself; and though, when their novelty was past, she might have enjoyed a deeper personal happiness and contentment than it was her lot to obtain, she would never have been light in her judgments, or frivolous in her estimates of mankind."

To our humble thinking Miss Berry was a dissatisfied woman; not dissatisfied meanly or unworthily, but ill-content with herself and her position. She wanted opportunities which never came in her way. She was conscious of powers for which she could find no fitting use. The social success which she enjoyed bulked more largely in the eyes of others than it did in her own. She felt her superiority to most of those who hovered around her, and longed for higher objects than any which her life afforded.

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It is evident that for this reason she resented the subordinate lot of woman as compared with that of man. She was constantly thinking of the wider field that would have opened before her had she had the privileges and freedom of manhood. She chafed at the restrictions then laid upon the education of woman; holding that their faults and frailties would be fewer if their culture were broader and deeper. Moreover, she was conscious of not being understood even by the ablest of the men who prized her friendship; that her thoughts went further than they troubled themselves to imagine; and this consciousness helped to produce the sense of discontent and disappointment under which she secretly laboured.

In 1807 she began to keep a regular journal, and it opens with a passage which forcibly illustrates the aspect of her character above commented upon :—

"I am going in future to write a journal . . . And yet, why begin a journal when more, *much* more, than half one's probable life is past, 'and all the life of life' certainly gone for ever! I have hitherto avoided it, because I felt ashamed of the use, or rather the no-use, I made of my time—of the miserable minute duties and vexations which at once occupied and corroded my mind—of the manner in which I have

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let life slip by me, and missed its present enjoyments, by always aiming at and acting for some indefinite future. But now that *no future* remains to me, perhaps I may be encouraged to make the most of the present by marking its rapid passage, and setting before my eyes the folly of letting a day escape without *endeavouring*, at least, to make the best I can of it, and, above all, without making impossible attempts to mend or alter anybody but myself."

Had she carried out this intention, we should have had a psychological study of rare value; but, in truth, the journal contains only a few expressions of individual thought or feeling, and is occupied with the sayings and doings of Miss Berry's friends and acquaintances rather than with the convictions and sentiments of Miss Berry herself.

We need hardly say, however, that it is full of interesting passages, reviving the recollections of scenes and personages that have now become historic, and preserving numerous incidents that history has not deigned to record. So much, indeed, might easily be predicated of the journal of a woman who counted among her friends nearly everybody who was famous in Society or Letters in the England of the last two Georges. But much of the value is due to the accurate

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insight into character which distinguished the journalist, to her keenness of observation and solidity of judgment.

The reader will not be displeased with us if we cull a few extracts, though the journal is easily accessible in Lady Theresa Lewis's edition.

She has dined with Dr. Vyse, Bishop of Peterborough. In the evening she sits, works, and listens to him. Though by no means a brilliant *raconteur*, he amuses her by relating a circumstance which happened to him very soon after he took orders; while reading the service before a large congregation in Hartingfordbury church. The lesson for the day was 1 Samuel xv., and the future bishop had come to the verse, "Wherefore do I hear this bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen?" when suddenly a great bell-wether gave tongue just below the pulpit, to the unconcealed amusement of the congregation. Sheep were feeding in the churchyard, and one of them had strayed unobserved into the church.

With Mrs. Damer, the sculptor, she goes to a *messe de minuit* and a *réveillon* at the Austrian ambassador, Prince Staremberg's. There she found of womankind only Madame de Pompier and Madame de Lapé, two

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Frenchwomen, whom she has never seen before, and feels no desire ever to see again. Soon after arrives the great singer, Catalani, then about 24, and in the prime of her powers, who fills up the time before the *messe* begins by singing in high spirits anything that comes into her head. The *messe* being said in a room below, Mrs. Damer and Miss Berry, as two *mécroyantes*, remain in the drawing-room with four of the men, who have not finished their party at whist. Afterwards, supper, at which everybody assists, to the number of about sixteen or seventeen, and Miss Berry returns home at half-past two A.M. Such is "high life" in 1807.

Here is another phase:—

"At eleven I went to Mrs. Villiers' [afterwards Countess of Clarendon], where was an assembly in the lower apartment—like all her parties, a great many fine ladies and all the fine men. A man in boots and a round hat, very drunk, walked in from the street to the middle of the first room, and was turned out by the gentlemen, and pushed out by the servants from the hall. At the street door he drew a sword from a stick, and was poking about with it, when Harry Bouverie broke it short off, and the watch carried the man, whoever he might be, to the watch-house."

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In May, 1809, Miss Berry was presented at the house of Mr. Hope—'Anastasius' Hope, to the Princess of Wales, whose sad story it is impossible to peruse without mingled feelings of contempt and compassion. It was rightly said that she was the Prince's only friend; for she extenuated his conduct by her constant revelations of the most deplorable want of modesty, self-respect and dignity. Clever she certainly was, and kindly-natured; but she was totally wanting in discretion and reserve, and her innate defects had never been remedied by careful training or wise advice. She had numerous enemies, but none so powerful as herself. Under the most favourable circumstances,—had she been fortunate enough to have wedded a Leopold of Saxe Coburg or an Albert of Saxe Gotha,—she could never have proved equal to the responsibilities of her position. And, however sincerely we may compassionate the sorrows of her life, we cannot refuse to own that they were in no small measure the result of her own follies and failings. It is clear, nevertheless, that she gradually won upon Miss Berry, and that the aversion with which the latter at first regarded her, when she wrote of her as "an over-dressed, bare-bosomed, painted eye-browed figure," gave way to a considerable amount

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of sympathy: that she learned to recognize her good qualities and to allow for much of her *étourderie* of conduct. Nor is it less obvious that the Princess, on her part, was fully conscious of the honesty and worth of Miss Berry as an adviser, and knew how to treat her with respect and affection.

Miss Berry records the particulars of a visit which the Princess paid her at Strawberry Hill:—

Attended by Lady Charlotte Lindsay, she arrived about three o'clock. She talked a great deal more than she looked at anything, and seemed pleased to have more people to talk to; the pictures and other attractions of the house, and observations on them, came merely to fill up gaps and give new matter for discourse. On this occasion she was in her very best manner, and her hostess concluded that her conversation was uncommonly lively and clever, even if somewhat "odd." What a pity, reflected Miss Berry, that she has not a grain of *common* sense! not an ounce of ballast to prevent high spirits and a coarse mind, without any degree of moral taste, from running away with her, and allowing her to act indecorously and ridiculously whenever an occasion offers! Were she always to conduct herself, thought Miss Berry, as she does to-day, she would merit the character of

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having not only a remarkably easy and gracious manner, but natural cleverness above any of her *peers* that I have seen . . . After walking over the house, she was carried into the library where refreshments were prepared. Of these she did not taste, but proposed that everybody should sit down, and after a further conversation of about half an hour, shook hands with all, and departed. "She had with her the little boy whom she brings up. Some poor body's son at Deptford, and whom she would do well to put to school, but does very ill to take about with her during his holidays. She is not of a disposition to want either the amusement or endearing tenderness of a child; and after all that has been said of her, one may easily guess what may be said of this little boy, about seven or eight years old." A great deal *was* said of this little boy, who, as Alfred Austin, figured conspicuously in the disgraceful proceedings taken by the Prince Regent, with a view to secure his divorce from the woman he had cruelly outraged and shamefully neglected.

Among Miss Berry's most intimate friends was Joanna Baillie, the poetess, whose dramas are now seldom read, in spite of their many merits. The two

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friends resembled one another very closely in character and tastes, and the nature of their intimacy may be understood from the letters that passed between them. We quote a specimen of Miss Berry's share of the correspondence :—

"Wimpole, Nov. 1809.

"My dear Joanna,—what are you doing? and where are you doing? Troth, say you, if you had wanted to know, you would have inquired sooner; and troth, if I had been doing better myself, so I should, answer I.

"I have been here a month with people that I love, in a comfortable family-circle, surrounded by every comfort and every luxury of life, and sitting in a library—such a library! as would—

> Make those read now, who never read before;
> And those who always read, now read the more.

Yet even thus situated, with the perfect command of my own time and nothing to fatigue me; if I were to tell you how little use I have been able to make of all these advantages; if I were to reckon up how many days in this month I have enjoyed the free and unembarrassed use of my own faculties; I should make you, as well as myself, melancholy, and therefore, as this is a good day with me, I will say no more about it.

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"My last and only letter from you was on the 8th, from Cotswold. You had been seeing Oxford, which I was delighted to find had impressed your mind, exactly as it had always done mine.. During my stay here I have been to Cambridge, which I had seen in a slight manner so long ago as to have almost entirely forgotten. It cannot vie with the magnificent groups of Oxford. But it has *one* college which may rival, if not surpass, Christ Church in picturesque beauty, and one point of view in which it appears singularly adapted for the seat of calm contemplation and learned ease. I fear the evil-minded will say, the calm is often unaccompanied by contemplation, and the ease unaccompanied by learning. Still I must ever love to see such great means brought together, and such assistance offered to both, and must ever feel a degree of exultation of mind in places dedicated for so many centuries to the cultivation of the noblest and most distinguished faculty of human nature; perhaps, too, a little spark of sexual vanity creeps in with the wonder one cannot help feeling at *men* enjoying such advantages and doing so little, and women labouring under such disadvantages doing so much. This, my dear Joanna, regards *you* more than any other

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female now living. Go on then and prove to them that poetry, at least, is as independent of sex as of rule; that it is a spark of ethereal fire kindled on earth once in an age, which Shakspeare alone has described, and with which you are enlightened."

Miss Berry's acquaintance with the Princess of Wales led to an introduction to her daughter, the ill-fated Princess Charlotte. We say "ill-fated," for all things considered, we do not think the epithet unsuitable. She is described as a fine girl of fifteen, with an open lively countenance, and well-cut expressive features; fair, like all her family, but with a "muddled complexion," owing to an attack of small-pox, which had also destroyed in part her eyebrows, and left several decided marks about the end of her nose. Her mouth was like her father's, but without having much sweetness; her eyes were by no means as handsome as her mother's. According to Miss Berry, she was lively, animated, and laughing. On the occasion of our journalist's introduction, she got into a talk with Lady Charlotte Campbell about being afraid of the devil, and ghosts, and about dismal stories; telling a good one

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herself, and making Miss Berry relate to her the plot of Lillo's melodrama, 'Fatal Curiosity.'

Other and more interesting names constantly occur in Miss Berry's journal. We read of the Kembles and their fine acting in 'Cato'; of Sir William Gell, the classical antiquary; of Grattan, the Irish orator; of Mrs. Siddons, who had "the germ of a superior nature in her, though burnt up by the long-continued dram of popular applause." We read, too, of Professor Playfair and Sir Humphry Davy, and of other magnates in literature and science. Occasionally we come across such an *aperçu* of the manners and customs of the times as the following (in 1811):—

"A man standing in the pillory in Oxford Street, at the end of our street, completely knocked me up, never having seen the operation before. I looked out of the window for the instant that the wretched man was putting in, and for one instant afterwards, when he was assailed by such a shower of every sort of mud, filth, and horrors, as to give every part of him and the machine one and the same hideous composition. The horror of seeing a degraded, wretched being, already exposed to the scorn and contempt of the multitude, thus treated

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by beings like himself; and to see the human form thus vilified, and human creatures—and these mostly women—thus treating it, seized upon my irritable nerves in such a manner as almost to give me what in my life I never had before—an hysterical affection between crying and screaming. I fled from the window, and took refuge in my back room, to hear as little as we could of the noise of the crowd."

The following extracts will interest those of our readers who have not access to the journal.

About Lord Byron :—

"Went to Lady Glenbervie's; Lord Byron was there, and I had a quarter of an hour's conversation, which, I own, gave me a great desire to know him better, and he seemed willing that I should do so. . . .

"At the end of the evening I had half an hour's conversation with Lord Byron, principally on the subject of the 'Scotch [Edinburgh] Review,' with which he is very much pleased. He is a singular man, and pleasant to me, but I very much fear that his head begins to be turned by all the adoration of the world, especially the women."

About the assassination of Perceval, the Prime Minister (May 11th, 1812):—

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"At dinner with my father and sister. I received from Mrs. Locke a card which had been sent to her, and upon which was the wonderful news of the assassination of Mr. Perceval in the lobby of the House of Commons. I began by doubting it, but a moment after our servant said he had heard it from Mr. Villiers's valet. [The Hon. J. C. Villiers was afterwards Earl of Clarendon.] Directly after dinner Agnes went to Lady Donegall, and I wrote to ask Mrs. Villiers about it. The Villiers had a large dinner, and I saw several persons arrive who ought to be well-informed. I received from them complete information of the report. We went early to Mrs. G. Lamb's, where there was young Macdonald, Mr. Morrice, and two or three other people who had been in the House of Commons, and afterwards at the examination of the assassin [Bellingham], who had not attempted to escape. Later in the evening Lords Lauderdale and Grey arrived, who had both been with the Address of the Lords to Carlton House. This deed, though horrible, is unfortunately one of all countries, and is not without its parallel even here. But that which is not so is the manner in which the populace took it, who surrounded the

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Houses of Parliament. They appeared so very little shocked."

Effects of inhaling nitrous oxide ("laughing gas"):—

"We went at three o'clock to Sir Humphry Davy's house to meet the Princess of Wales, who was coming to take herself, and to see taken, the Imperial Gas. I had never before seen its wonderful effect, of which I had formed but a very imperfect idea. Davy had taken it, and Sidney Smith, Sir J. Mackintosh, and Lady C. Campbell, and the Princess [of Wales]. The dose administered to the latter was so small that the effects were only visible in the eyes and upon the complexion; but upon the others it was an excitement, a vivacity, in fact, a wonderful intoxication of three or four minutes, astonishing! and so delightful to themselves that they wished to retake it, and could not and would not desist from imbibing the dose which was destined for them, so long as the slightest breath remained."

Miss Berry's second attempt as a dramatic authoress:—

"Called by appointment on Sir George Beaumont [the artist, amateur, and friend of Wordsworth] to

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meet Colman [the manager of the Haymarket, and author of some popular comedies and farces], and read with him 'The Two Martins,' as Sir George had told him that it was written by a woman. I owned myself to be that woman, exacting at the same time the secrecy which every manager of a theatre grants and keeps faithfully. I read the piece: he stopped me each time where he thought something piquant could be added, and all his observations were like a master of the art. He took away the little piece, with full permission to make any alterations he liked; he proposed returning it to me with his ideas upon the alterations, so that I could make them myself."

A literary symposium:—

"Dined with the Princess at Kensington. The company: Lady C. Lindsay, Lady C. Campbell, Mr. Lewis, Sir Humphry and Lady Davy, Sir James Mackintosh, Sir Henry Englefield, Mrs. and Miss [Wellesley] Pole, Lord Glenbervie, and Campbell the poet, who was to read his first discourse upon Poetry, which he had delivered at the [Russell] Institution; he did so during the evening with very good effect. At dinner, Lewis gave out a thousand *bêtises* upon the subject of poetry, pretending that he found Homer

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and Virgil wearisome. Campbell's discourse appeared to be made expressly to punish him, and to expose the inaptitude [ineptitude ?] of those heterodox opinions. Poor Lewis was in a very bad humour, and did not know where to hide his head during the reading, so he pretended to be sleeping."

Lewis, called "Monk" Lewis, from the title of a notorious work of fiction which he had given to the reading public, was the author of 'The Castle Spectre,' and numerous melodramas and pieces of verse,—all exhibiting a lively fancy and considerable command of easy versification. His social qualities secured him a wide circle of friends, and are commemorated by Byron:

"I would give many a sugar cane,
Mat Lewis were alive again!"

Byron adds, in prose:—"Lewis was a good man, a clever man, but a bore. My only revenge or consolation used to be setting him by the ears with some vivacious person who hated bores especially,—Madame de Staël or Hobhouse, for example. But I liked Lewis; he was the jewel of a man, had he been better set;—I don't mean *personally*, but less *tiresome*, for he was tedious, as well as contradictory to every thing and everybody."

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Sir Henry Englefield was a geologist of repute, and author of a standard work on the Isle of Wight.

Here is a reference to the late Lady Byron :—

"I was at the hotel dining with Lady Milbanke, her daughter, Mrs. Hervey, and Mrs. and Miss Chaloner. Lady Milbanke's daughter appears to have a great deal of mind, and she is said to have a good deal of information, and is not at all affected."

Next the authoress of 'Evelina' comes before us :—

"Went to Lady Crewe's, who gave a sort of *luncheon dinner*, to which we were invited, to meet Dr. Burney and his sister Madame d'Arblay. They were neither of them there. When we entered a dozen ladies were sitting around the fire with Miladi. Lawrence, the painter, the only gentleman. Dr. Burney was ill, and could not come, but at last Madame d'Arblay arrived. I was very glad to see her again. She is wonderfully improved in good looks in ten years, which have usually a very different effect at an age when people begin to fall off. Her face has acquired expression and a charm which it never had before. She has gained an *embonpoint* very advantageous to her face."

Lady Crewe was herself a woman of Fashion, and

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a leader of Society, drawing around her the principal members of the Whig party, and delighting everybody by the grace of her conversation and the charm of her manners.

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III.

TOWARDS the close of 1813, the Miss Berrys gave up their house at Little Strawberry Hill, and removed to London; an arrangement rendered necessary by economical considerations. In a letter to Lady Hardwicke the elder sister describes with much vivacity the closing annals of her suburban sojourn :—

"Where are we, and what have we been about? Why, we have been keeping a guinguette (*Anglicè*, a hedge ale-house), to which I have *assigned* the *sign* of the 'Cat and Bagpipes,' where everybody has seemed to take it for granted that they were sure to find 'Tea and coffee,' 'Hot roast and boiled every day,' and 'Dinners dressed on the shortest notice.' Certainly our custom in the *chance line* has been great, to say nothing of our beds having been always 'slept in *the night before.*'

"Thus have passed the six or eight weeks which I had destined to quiet reading, to Charles the

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Second, the Duchess of Cleveland, and many such worthies.

"But we are now shortly going to a retreat which we shall certainly find sufficiently retired—I mean North Audley Street. Our business here in the *public line*, however great, has not, as you may suspect, been *profitable*, so that we cannot make any further excursions *en famille* this year. We have, however, much enjoyed our sojourn at this pretty little place, which was never in greater beauty.

"Parting with it, however necessary, and however I have wished it, will be a pang—parting with it for seven years!—for more, much more, than *ever* to me! N'en parlons plus. 'Quite the contrary.' Let me tell you that Madame de Staël sticks to her intention of coming to you the middle of November—that I stick to *my* intention of meeting her, and that Sir J. Mackintosh, who in October is going, not fox-hunting, but paper-hunting, to the Duke of Leeds, in Yorkshire, intends meeting us both at Wimpole on his return,—if you and Lord Hardwicke do not forbid these banns. Long before that time I trust you will have drunk your fill of Malvern. By the bye, drinking puts me in mind of four ridiculous lines, being an account of the travels of the learned Porson, which Sir J. Mackintosh

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repeated to us the other day, and which I send to Lord Hardwicke:—

> "I went to Strasbourg to get drunk
> With that learnèd Grecian Brouncke;
> And then to Leipzig to get drunker
> With that more learnèd Grecian Brouncker."

Upon which Madame de Staël exclaimed, '*Ah! que c'est joli!*' an application of the word which amused me almost as much as the lines.

"The said Staël is still at Richmond till the end of the month, when the torrent of words and ideas will no longer flow into the Thames, but turn its course towards London, and then to Lord Lansdowne's, and then into Staffordshire, and then—'To Nova Zembla and the Lord knows where'; but still she sticks to being at Wimpole the middle of November.

"I trust and hope long before that time to have better accounts of your voice; but if you must still be deprived of it, there cannot certainly be a more convenient visitor to a *dumb* woman than Madame de Staël."

Miss Berry's social engagements, and her frequent excursions in England and on the Continent, did not

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prevent her from aspiring to a position in the world of literature. Her efforts, if not entirely successful, show, at all events, that her natural powers were considerable, and that she had cultivated them with assiduity. She prepared a selection of the Letters of Madame du Daffand, and in the preface entered upon an elaborate defence of her friendship with Walpole, and a memoir of the writer, which has been largely used by later biographers. To Madame du Daffand, by the way, belongs the proverbial epigram which is so often ascribed to Madame de Staël:—"Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte." A more ambitious book was one which, in its day, attained a great, and, on the whole, a deserved popularity:—'Comparative View of Social Life in France and England.' The force and accuracy with which she sketches individuals, and the fairness with which she judges the distinctive qualities of both nations, give it a real importance, and justify us in saying of it as a whole what Benjamin Constance said of the first volume,—"On vit avec les individus: ce n'est pas une lecture, mais une Société dans laquelle on entre."

In imitation of La Bruyère she wrote a series of 'Characters,' which appear to exhibit the same insight into the foibles and failings of humanity, but are dis-

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figured by that coarseness of tone which is also a blemish of Miss Berry's comedy. Lord Houghton gives as a specimen the character of Flavia,—the notorious Duchess of Gordon. But for his lordship's example, we should have had some hesitation in quoting it, and no doubt it will surprise the reader that a lady of the purest life and the purest morality should have found a pleasure in dealing with such a subject, and should have dealt with it so freely:—

"Flavia was intended for a woman of gallantry. Circumstances have settled her in the country, the wife of a dull husband and the mother of a dozen children. Her constitution and her conscience are eternally at war and will continue so, till age delivers her up to devotion and robs both of the victory. As a woman of gallantry she would have had every virtue but one, and all the others would have been easy to her. As a sober matron the practice of that one is so painful as to rob her of all satisfaction from any of the others. Made for pleasure, she would have had just enough sentiment to enhance her favours, and too much constitution to allow her sentiment to tire any one with her constancy. True to one lover whilst he possessed her, if he contrived to throw another in her way, he

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might be always sure to get rid of her with only just as much distress as would flatter his vanity and interest the next man to whom she became attached. Too much occupied with herself and her desires to think much of other people, she could have been satisfied and benevolent to all the world except her rival, and the moment this rival ceased to offend her in that capacity, she would have been capable of making her her bosom friend. Her confessor would have cleared her conscience of all her daily transgressions, with less trouble than he now has to quiet her doubts about past wanderings and her regret at present mortification. Her naturally warm feeling would have repented on her knees to God with hardly less transport than she would have returned to sin in the arms of her lover. As a woman of gallantry she would have been the best of her tribe, and her vices would have been natural to her. As a matron, her faults only belonged to her, and her virtues are so little her own that they punish instead of making her happy."

This is a clever and effective sketch; but it would have been better if it had never been written.

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Miss Berry's house at Curzon Street became for thirty years the centre of a distinguished circle, each member of whom was attracted by her kindliness of heart and excellent sense rather than by any special brilliancy of conversation. She excelled in eliciting all that was best and brightest in her guests, and charmed them by her evident interest in whatever they said and did. And besides, if her conversation could not be called brilliant, it was always instructive and entertaining; for she had seen much, read much, and reflected much, and no subject could be introduced on which she was not able to contribute her share of information. She was sufficiently clever and well-read to make her opinion a matter of importance, and to ensure the respect of men of genius; and yet not so learned as to alarm by the outflow of her erudition, or so able as to terrify her guests into silence. Then again she was given neither to scandal nor satire; and people went to her *réunions* with the comfortable assurance that on leaving they would not be made the butt of their hostess's pungent wit, nor expose their characters to the attacks of vilifying tongues. And, finally, to quote Lord Houghton once more, while the conversation at Lydia White's (Byron's Miss Diddle—"remember Miss Diddle invites us to sup")

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might have been more literary, and at Lady Davy's more scientific, at the Miss Berrys it had a flavour of fashion about it which even the most philosophic or matter-of-fact Englishman does not disapprove, was kept wholly free from any speciality which could be made an object of ridicule or afford a ground of offence. . . . "It is no exaggeration to say, that such a society as the Misses Berry established and maintained for nearly half a century, —bringing together on a common ground of female intercourse, not only men illustrious in different walks of life, but what might aptly be called the men of the day—men who had won and men who were winning, men who wished to learn and men ready to teach, restrained and softened by a womanly influence that never degenerated into the social police which a less skilful hostess often finds necessary to impose—had its moral and political bearings, besides its personal and superficial influences."

"No taint or scoff obscured the wit
That there rejoiced to reign;
They never would have laughed at it
If it had carried pain.

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There needless scandal, e'en though true,
Provoked no bitter smile,
And even men-of-fashion grew
Benignant for awhile.

"Not that there lacked the nervous scorn
At every public wrong,
Not that a friend was left forlorn
When victim of the strong;
Few words expressing generous blood
No mild punctilio weighed,
For deep an earnest womanhood
Their reason underlaid.

"As generations onward came,
They loved from all to win
Revival of the sacred flame
That glowed their hearts within;
While others in Time's greedy mesh
The faded garlands flung,
Their hearts went out and gathered fresh
Affections from the young."

Miss Berry served as a link between two generations. We have hitherto shown her in her relations to the men and women of the reign of George III. In our concluding pages we must

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glance at her connections with those of a later time.

Here is a sketch of Edward Irving, which differs greatly from the ordinary references to that remarkable enthusiast :—

"Agnes went at ten o'clock to hear the famous Scotch preacher in Hatton Garden (Irving). Later in the day it was proposed to me to go and hear the same preacher. I was very glad to accept the offer. The service did not begin till half-past six o'clock. Notwithstanding bad weather, long before that time the chapel was as full as possible; it was a farewell to his congregation. He is going for some months to Scotland. He only spoke of himself, of all he had done, and all the miracles he had worked. His eloquence, even when his subject admitted of it, seemed to me *commonplace;* but one must not judge upon once hearing, nor upon a discourse for an occasion."

This was written in 1823. In the same year Harry Crabb Robinson heard the "famous Scotch preacher," and recorded his impressions as follows :—

"Went to the Caledonian Chapel to hear Mr. Irving. . . . I do not wonder that his preaching should be thought to be acting, or at least as

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indicative of vanity as of devotion. I overheard some old ladies at Hatton Garden declaring that it was not not pure gospel, and they did not wish to hear any more, etc. The most unfavourable circumstance, as tending to confirm this suspicion, is a want of keeping in his discourse. Abrupt changes of style, as if written (and it *was* written) at a dozen different sittings. His tone equally variable. No master-feeling running through the whole, like the red string through the Royal Marine ropes, to borrow an image from Goethe. Yet his sermon was very impressive. I caught myself wandering but once. It began with a very promising division of his subject. His problem to show how the spiritual man is equally opposed to the sensual, the intellectual, and the moral man; but he expatiated chiefly on the sensual character. He drew some striking pictures. He was very vehement, both in gesticulation and declamation."

We return to Miss Berry's journal. In February, 1834, we meet with an entry of some interest:—

"I was interrupted by being sent for to take leave of Macaulay, who leaves England this very day for India. An honourable desire for securing to himself political independence, and the fortunes of two sisters,

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has engaged him to take a most honourable place in the Council at Madras; but there he must remain for at least six or seven years! So that my farewell was for ever; and it was certainly not without sincere regret that I saw depart so distinguished, so extraordinary, a member of society! so very unlikely to be soon replaced! for his conversational powers were yet greater than his House of Commons' eloquence."

Miss Berry was happily mistaken, however, in her vaticination. Her farewell was "*not* for ever." She lived to welcome Macaulay on his return to England; to include him amongst her dearest friends; and to rejoice over his parliamentary and literary successes. In December, 1848, she writes:—"Can I send off a letter without mentioning Maucaulay's book? Of all the seducing books you ever read, I venture to say you will agree this is the first.... I had Macaulay to dine with me, and six others came to meet him.... Talking of Macaulay, I hope you have got his book, as the *very* most entertaining reading I ever met with.... The first edition of 3000 copies was sold in the first week; another, of 3000 more, is to come out on Thursday next. He bears his honours most quietly; but the men who dined with him here last week said they had never seen him so entertaining."

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Here are two glimpses of famous places; famous, be it said, for widely different reasons:—

"We spent four days at Combe-Florey, Mr. Sidney Smith's Rectory-house, the beauty of which we had heard much more vaunted than we thought it deserved. It is in a complete bottom, the ground rising on all sides, consequently seeing positively nothing but a neat flower-garden before the windows. *Au reste*, a very comfortable house, in a very pretty well-cultivated English county."

"Much as I have heard of the good style of Bowood in every respect, both as to arrangements of life and of society, it much exceeds my expectations. I have never seen such comfortable and elegant luxury pervading any department, without any cumbrous pomp. The communications throughout the house are singularly commodious; the furniture magnificent, as to pictures and as to books. As to everything else, every comfortable elegance of table and of chairs and of sofas, without such gilding and satin as prevents one ever settling comfortably on them. A sufficient litter of books and boxes to give the look and the means of occupation, along with a perfect air of orderly arrangement in the different rooms,—a thorough disposition to enjoy them all. Breakfasting in the

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drawing-room, among all the finest pictures; because the morning sun makes that room the most cheerful, and allows leisure to enjoy the pictures, which are not so numerous as to perplex. The hours are regular, without any punctilious exactness. The mornings entirely your own, from breakfast to luncheon at two o'clock; after which every one takes exercise their own way, or does anything that is proposed to them; leaving always time to rest before dinner, at seven o'clock. The library open to every one, and the books all easily got at. In the evening the house and its walls are accustomed to conversation, and it never seems to flag. Little Moore, who lives within three miles of this place, and is always a well-received guest, helps it on, and diversifies it sometimes with his singing some of his own verses. Since the two Liddells have been here, Lady Barrington and Lady Williamson, we have had delightful music, and much of it, every evening. Their voices are admirable, and their style of singing excellent. I don't know where I have been more delighted with music, although they have seldom sung any of my particular favourites. This morning we have been in the chapel, which very conveniently opens from the greenhouse. The organist of the neighbouring town comes every

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Saturday to instruct the parish children in singing. Our two ladies gave us several pieces of Handel divinely well, with the accompaniment of the organ, Lord Lansdowne always much enjoying music."

This was the Lord Lansdowne to whom Mr. Ticknor refers:—"He goes out a great deal, and entertains as much as ever. He seems to me more amiable and agreeable than ever, and enjoys a green old age, surrounded with the respect of all, even of those most opposed to him in politics."

Pleasant pictures of life at Bowood will be found in the gossiping pages of Moore's Diary.

To the very last Miss Berry retained her mental vigour. She was eighty-five when she wrote the following letter to her friend, the Countess of Morley:—

"A thousand thanks for your most comfortable letter of the 3rd, whether, *corresponsively* speaking, I deserved it or not. It came most opportunely, for I have been more than ordinarily unwell for the last week, and am *much more* than ordinarily weakened by it, although, therefore, I can less than usual agree with you in your statement of what I have to meet and combat, with the ills of eighty-five years of life. I most entirely agree with you in your view of the

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prospects, the consolations, and the comforts of that state of existence, when we can look back to the sufferings, the anxieties, the baffled hopes, the cruel disappointments, the poignant griefs, the crushed dictates of high aspirations, and the quiet sufferings of tender hearts, at discovering that, short-lived as we are, our sentiments often die before us. To have cast all this behind one, I must think a great relief, and I pity those who do not feel it so. But at the foot of that *isthmus* which you so well describe, lays a morass in which mere physical weakness often more than half smothers all powers but those of mere existence, and all sense but of the failure of those powers. This, this is death, not the mere yielding up of breath which can no longer be of any value."

In 1849 the Berrys were sorely afflicted by the death of their old friend and companion, Lady Charlotte Lindsay. The journal was no longer kept; and it is a significant circumstance that no letters appear to have been preserved after this event. Miss Berry felt that she had outlived her interest in life; her old friends and acquaintances had gone before; she lingered on the empty stage after the play was played out, and

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when all the lights were extinguished. In January, 1852, died the younger sister, Agnes. She has been described as a pale reflection of Mary Berry, and no doubt her individuality was to a great extent absorbed in that of the elder sister, with her stronger intellect and more determined character; but she had attractions of her own to which those who knew her could not be insensible.

In June, 1852, the aged survivor was admitted to a private audience of the Queen. In a letter to a friend dated June 28th, she writes:—"I have had the honour of having been sent for by the Queen, who, by my friend the Duchess of Sutherland, desired (as she said) to *make my acquaintance.* Luckily, I had strength enough to carry me through the interview very agreeably; and I was much pleased to find our sovereign so pleasing and so unaffected a person, to say nothing of her extreme graciousness to me."

Sir William Gell, the antiquary, was not only a friend of the Berrys, but a devoted partisan of the Princess of Wales, and in the following letter addressed to Lady Charlotte Bury, he mentions both:—

". . . In reply to your kind inquiry about my health, I am happy to be able to tell you I never was more flourishing. Enough on that score. You ask

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me for news of the Princess. Her Royal Highness appears gay and well in health. I have dined frequently lately at Kensington, and the society has been most agreeable and 'select,' as the papers say. But when I tell you these parties were made up of the [Lady Caroline] Lindsay, and *the* Berry, par excellence of all Berries in the world; Lady Oxford, who is lovely indeed to look upon; my Lord Byron; sometimes Sidney Smith, from whom issues perpetual and dazzling sparks of the most brilliant wit; the grave Lord Henry; and, though last not least, your humble servant; you can believe these parties must be superexcellent, reflecting on the superior qualities of each individual who has composed them. It is wrong in me to have omitted our royal hostess herself; for to 'us' much of the gaiety and spirit of these entertainments is due. '*We*' are most irresistibly good-natured and droll, in despite of ourselves.

"Oh, the English! Oh, the English! it is perfect. Fie, fie, Mr. Gell, *dat* is a great shame, 'pon honour. You see *vat* it is to make one man one's friend who laugh at me when I do turn my back.'

"'I do hate Lord Henry, my dear;—to *tell you God's truth*, I cannot bear dat man.' (Courtier)—'I

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agree with your Royal Highness.' (*Aside*) 'The Lord forgive you for *being*, for *being*,' etc.

"To return to the Kensington parties,—joking apart, they are the pleasantest arranged meetings in London."*

In the autumn of 1852, Miss Berry paid a visit to her friend, Lady Scott, at Petersham,. returning to London towards the end of October. It was then observed that her health was decidedly breaking. Soon her illness became serious; and on the physicians abandoning all hope of her recovery, Lady Scott hastened to her side. On the 20th of November, at midnight, without a sigh or a struggle, she passed away, in her 90th year. She was buried by the side of her sister at Petersham, and among the mourners at her grave were Dean Milman, the Earl of Carlisle, Charles Greville, and Monckton Milnes (now Lord Houghton). The following graceful inscription to the memory of herself and her sister proceeded from the accomplished pen of the late Earl of Carlisle :—

* 'Diary of the Times of George IV.,' ed. by J. Galt. vol. iv. pp. 128, 129.

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MARY BERRY,

Born March, 1763; Died November, 1852.

AGNES BERRY,

Born May, 1764; Died January, 1852.

Beneath this Stone are laid the remains of
These
Two Sisters,
Amidst scenes which in life
They had frequented and loved,
Followed by the tender regret of those who close
The unbroken succession of friends
Devoted to them with fond affection
During every step
Of their long career.

In pious adoration of the great God of Heaven and Earth
They looked to rest in the Lord.
They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their
Death they were not divided.

With the lives of the sisters, as Lady Theresa Lewis remarks, closed a remarkable and an unique society, of which in our own days there seems to

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be no example. Apparently no one admitted to the pleasant little gatherings in Curzon Street can think of them with other feelings than those of tender regret and admiring sympathy. Sometimes a note, sometimes a word, and more often only the lamp lighted over the door, served as an invitation to attend; and the delighted guest on entering, whether he found a few *habitués*, or a larger or more brilliant assembly, was sure to receive a cordial welcome, and to enjoy a delightful evening. There sat "the two genial, lively, well-dressed, distinguished-looking hostesses;" there sparkled the comfortable tea-table, over which their friend, Miss Anne Turner, presided for years, and Lady Charlotte Lindsay, the third partner in the firm, clever and agreeable to the last. There was an absence of formality, says Lady Theresa Lewis; a kindly mingling together of persons of various habits, pursuits, and positions in life, that tended to bring different portions of society together, as much as in other coteries there is a tendency to keep them apart; and when death had closed this little chapter in our social life, no one attempted, or indeed could have carried it on with equal success; their age, their experience in society, Miss Berry's acknowledged talent, their home-

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staying life, their absence of domestic duties and of family ties, all contributed to give them the power and the means which others have not, to do that which few would have done so well, under equally favourable circumstances."

Within one undisturbed abode
  Their presence seems to dwell,
From which continual pleasures flowed,
  And countless graces fell;
Not unbecoming this our age
  Of decorative forms,
Yet simple as the hermitage,
  Exposed to Nature's storms.

Our English grandeur on the shelf,
  Deposed its decent gloom,
And every pride unloosed itself
  Within that modest room,
Where none were sad, and few were dull,
  And each one said his best,
And beauty was most beautiful,
  With vanity at rest.

Lord Houghton.

END OF VOL. I.

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